ULTIMATE COMICS™

X-MEN®

ISSUE 01

SPENCER MEDINA VLASCO GRACIA

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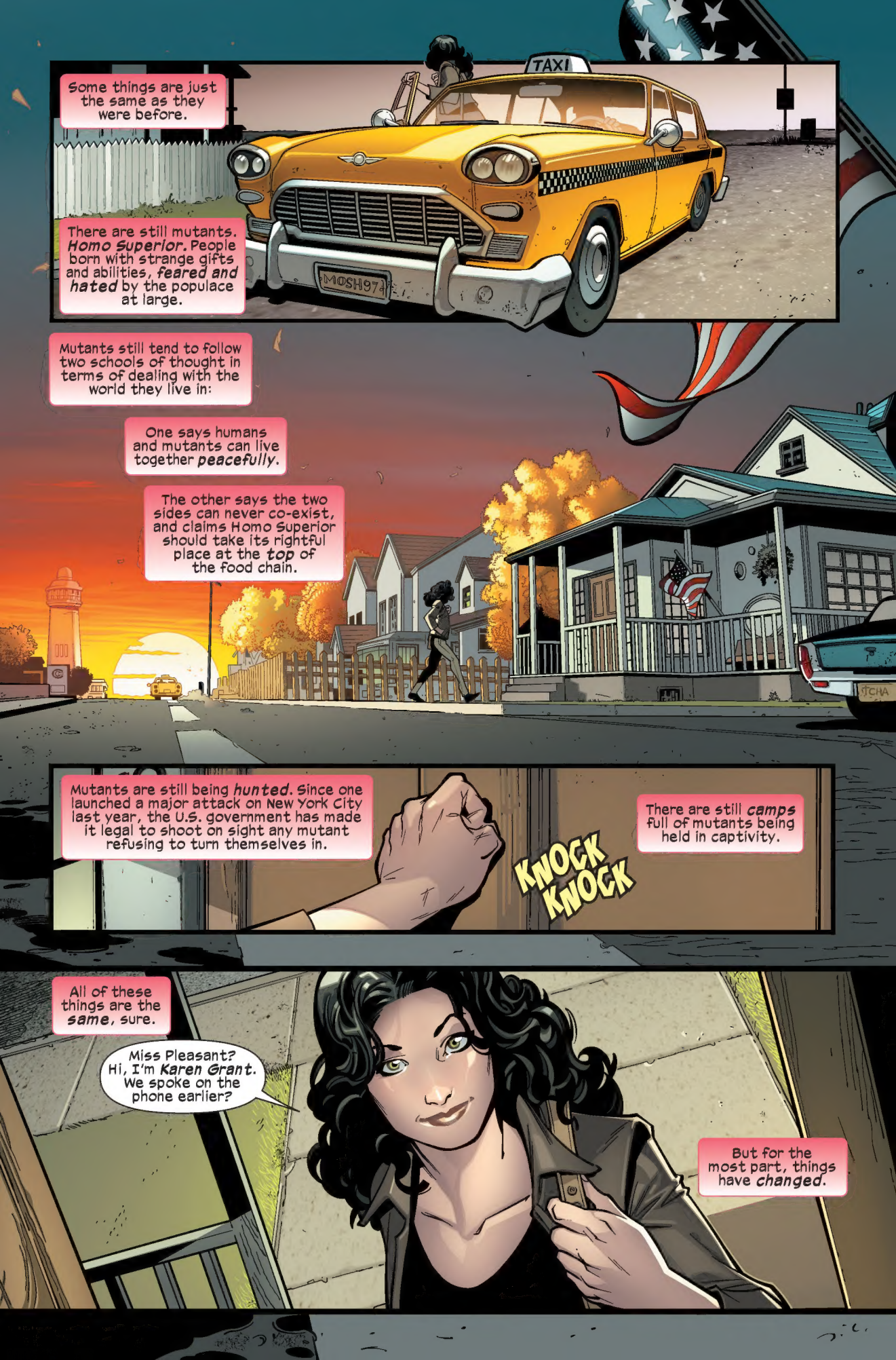
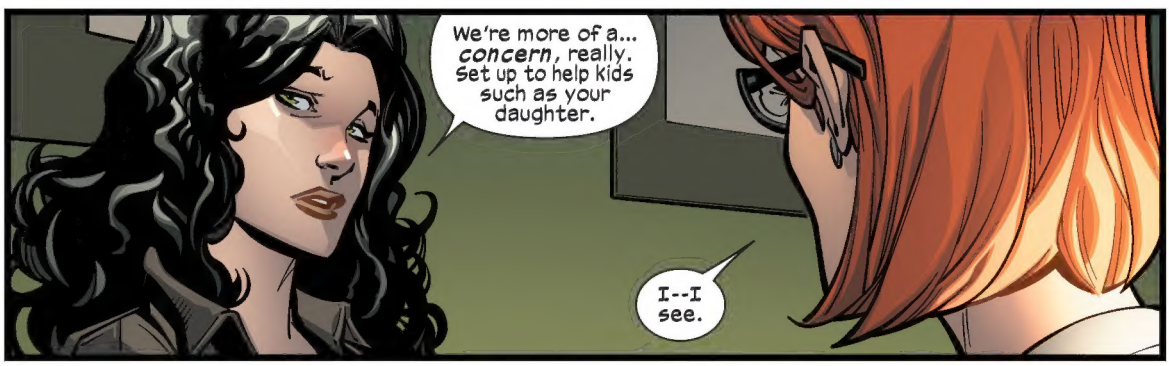
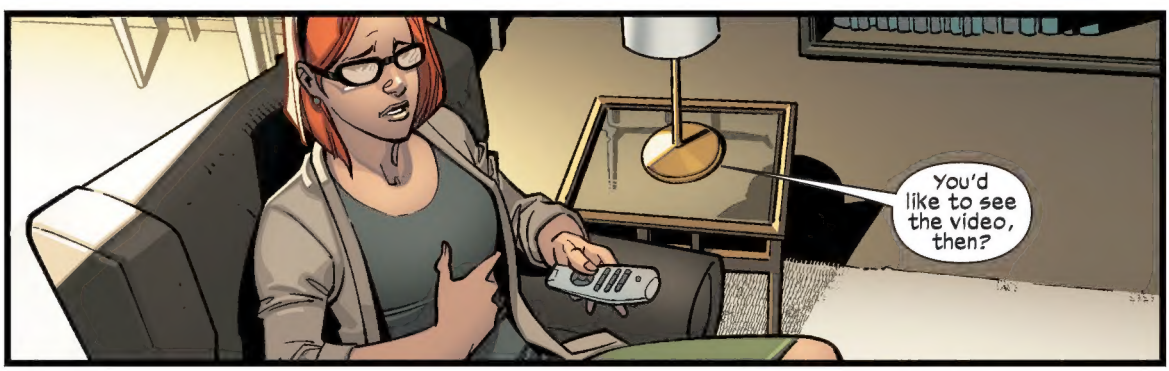
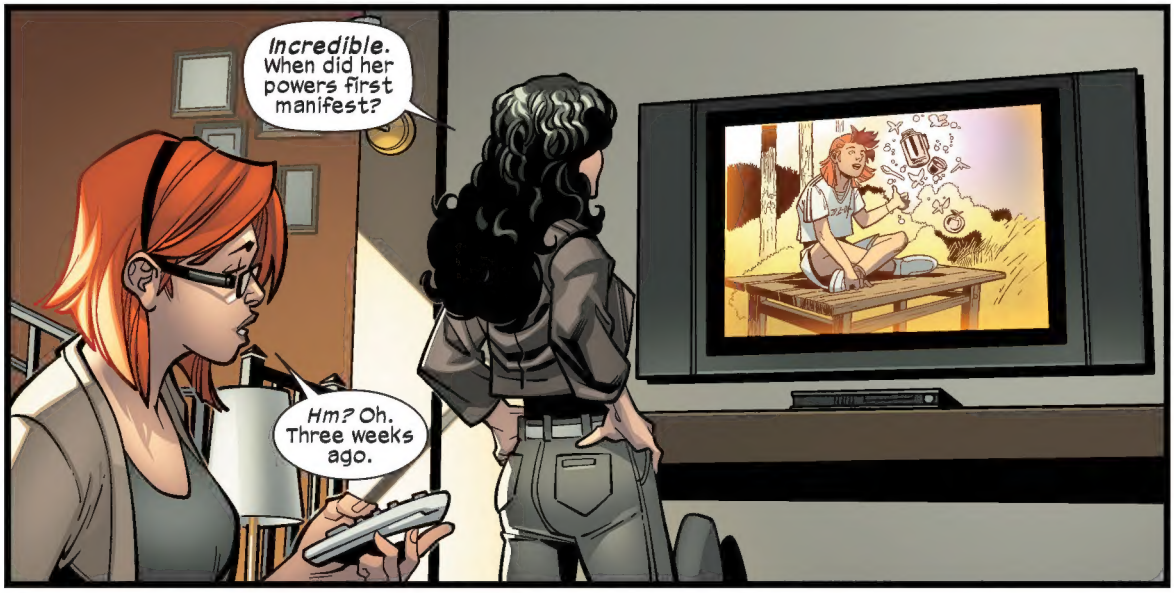

Some things are just the same as they were before.
TAXI
MOSH974
There are still mutants. *Homo Superior.* People born with strange gifts and abilities, *feared and hated* by the populace at large.
Mutants still tend to follow two schools of thought in terms of dealing with the world they live in:
One says humans and mutants can live together *peacefully*.
The other says the two sides can never co-exist, and claims Homo Superior should take its rightful place at the *top* of the food chain.
Mutants are still being *hunted*. Since one launched a major attack on New York City last year, the U.S. government has made it legal to shoot on sight any mutant refusing to turn themselves in.
KNOCK KNOCK
There are still *camps* full of mutants being held in captivity.
All of these things are the *same*, sure.
Miss Pleasant? Hi, I'm *Karen Grant*. We spoke on the phone earlier?
But for the most part, things have *changed*.

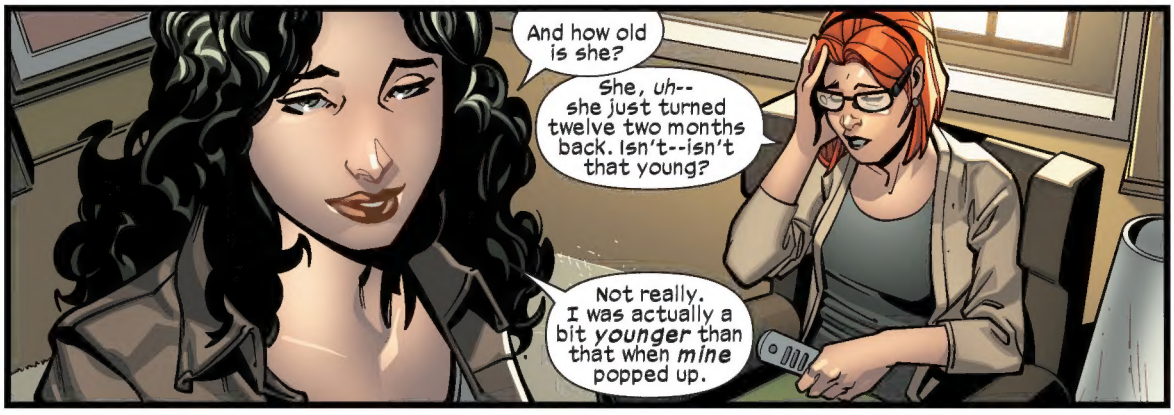
Of--of course. Come in.
Thanks.
Would you like some coffee?
I'm fine, thank you.

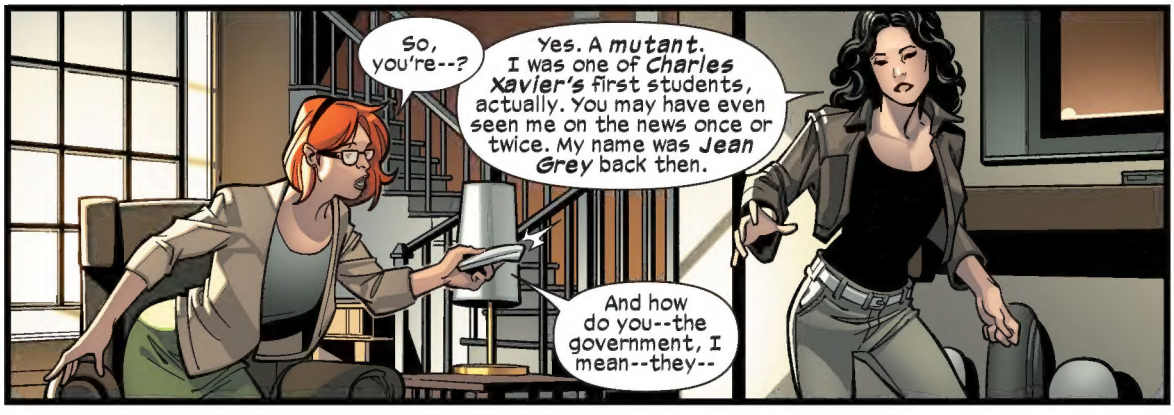
I didn't really understand from the call--did you say you were with some kind of a school?
No. *Not a school.*


We're more of a... *concern*, really. Set up to help kids such as your daughter.
I--I see.


You'd like to see the video, then?

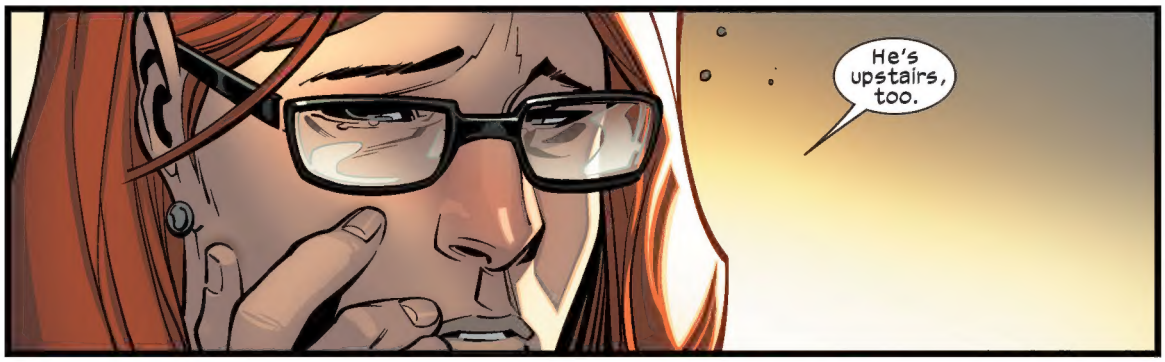

Incredible. When did her powers first manifest?
Hm? Oh. Three weeks ago.


And how old is she?
She, uh-- she just turned twelve two months back. Isn't--isn't that young?
Not really. I was actually a bit younger than that when mine popped up.


So, you're--?
Yes. A mutant. I was one of Charles Xavier's first students, actually. You may have even seen me on the news once or twice. My name was Jean Grey back then.
And how do you--the government, I mean--they--

Our relationship with the government is somewhat... complicated at the moment.
What I can assure you of, though, Miss Pleasant, is that if your daughter comes with us, she won't be shuffled off into some containment camp.
Now, would it be possible to meet Chelsea this afternoon? Just to begin the conversation--?

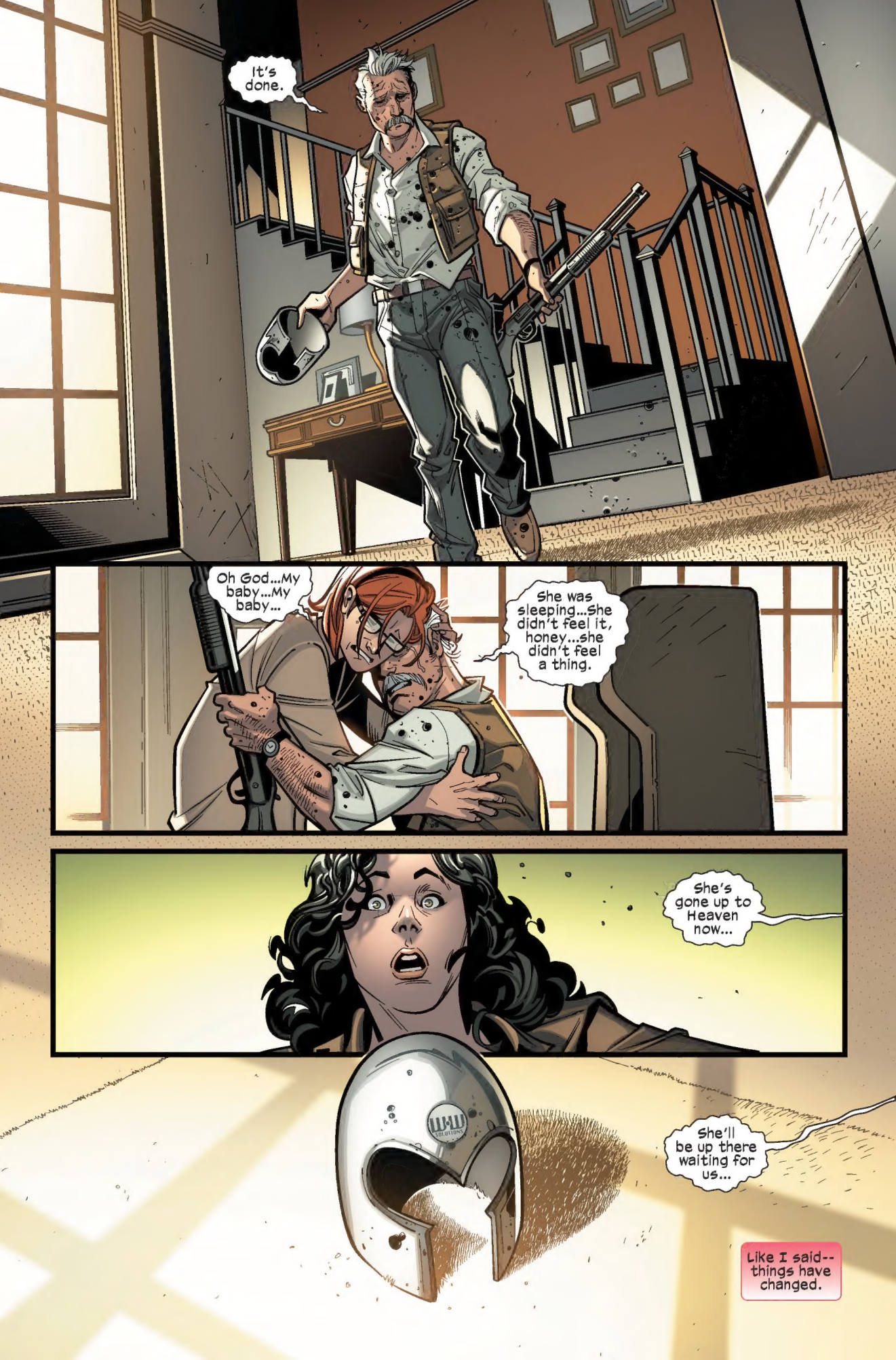
She--she's upstairs. Taking a nap. She tires out easily lately.
Of course. That's normal, too. Can I ask--where is *Mister Pleasant* today?


He's upstairs, too.

Ma'am, forgive me for being so direct, but would you mind if I just went up and--
I'm sorry. When you called, I--I thought maybe we could try something else--

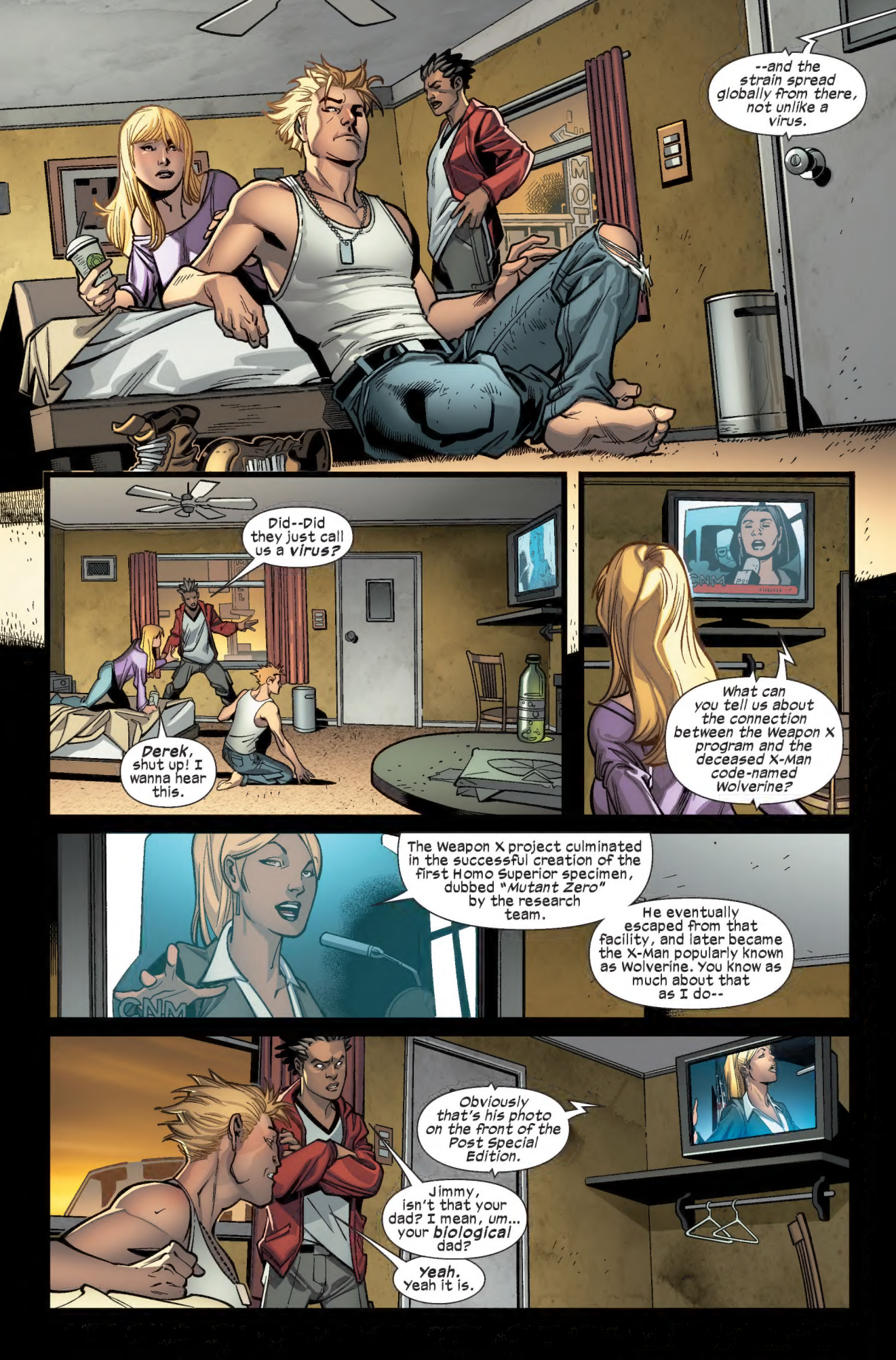
But you know he's right. She can't go through all this. She's a good girl!
+sob+
When he heard you were coming--
Wait. Don't--

BLAM!!!
She--She's gone.

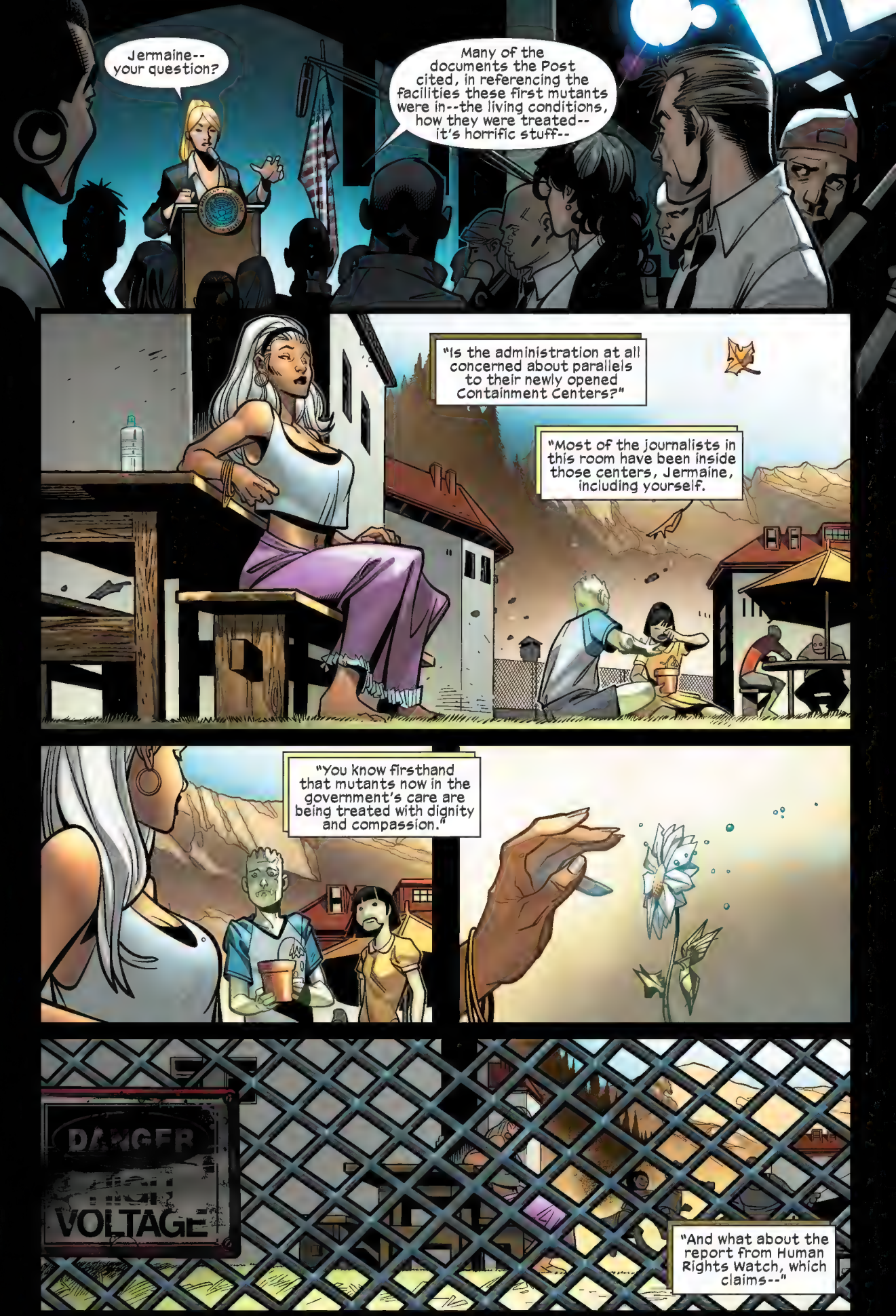

It's done.
Oh God...My baby...My baby...
She was sleeping...She didn't feel it, honey...she didn't feel a thing.
She's gone up to Heaven now...
She'll be up there waiting for us...
Like I said--things have changed.

And here's the *worst* part of it: If all that had changed is how they treated us--what they did to us--well, trust me, that would be a *lot* easier to deal with.
But then--everything we knew about ourselves, everything we believed about who we were and where we came from--
That all changed, too.
Good afternoon. My name is *Valerie Cooper*. I'm the President's Special Liaison on Superhuman and Mutant Affairs.
You've all already seen the President's statement, I'm sure, so I trust we can dispense with the formalities and get right to it.
At one P.M. today, the Washington Post, in a report citing previously classified documentation acquired through the Freedom of Information Act, disclosed the following:
Rather than being the product of evolutionary processes, random genetic mutation, or outside interference, mutants--the race known as Homo Superior--
--are the product of a series of experiments in bio-engineering that were conducted and funded by the United States government.
I'm gonna go straight to questions.

Yes, Aaron--
What's the President's reaction to what we've been seeing in the streets since this news broke?
NEW YORK.
CHICAGO.
Smart
LOS ANGELES.
As the President said in his statement, he hopes that people will remain calm and let an investigation run its course. He understands the desire for answers, but violence is clearly *not* a solution here.
Chris?
Has the President spoken to any foreign leaders yet? And if so, is he prepared to accept responsibility for the creation of mutants in *those* countries?
To the first part, I'm not at liberty to say.
But as to the latter, my understanding is yes. The mutant genetic strain was created in an American-funded lab based in Canada--


--and the strain spread globally from there, not unlike a virus.
Did--Did they just call us a virus?
Derek, shut up! I wanna hear this.
What can you tell us about the connection between the Weapon X program and the deceased X-Man code-named Wolverine?
The Weapon X project culminated in the successful creation of the first Homo Superior specimen, dubbed "Mutant Zero" by the research team.
He eventually escaped from that facility, and later became the X-Man popularly known as Wolverine. You know as much about that as I do--
Obviously that's his photo on the front of the Post Special Edition.
Jimmy, isn't that your dad? I mean, um... your biological dad?
Yeah. Yeah it is.

Are you--?
Jimmy! Where are you going?!
I wanna see it, Lizzie. I wanna see where they did that to him.
What? No... they just said that place got shut down like sixty years ago. Besides, you can't just leave--
The hell I can't.
Listen, Karen will be back any minute. She'll know what to do. I know you're upset, but--
You don't think she knew about this?! Open your eyes, girl.
Whoa, man, come on. You don't know that.
Me, I just found out everything I was told about where I came from was a lie. So yeah, sorry--
Look, y'all wanna stick around here with Karen, pretend to be the new X-Men and play "save the mutie" every day 'til some Sentinel calls your number up, that's fine--
"But I am done takin' anybody's word for anything."
portales
TEL
TV cable

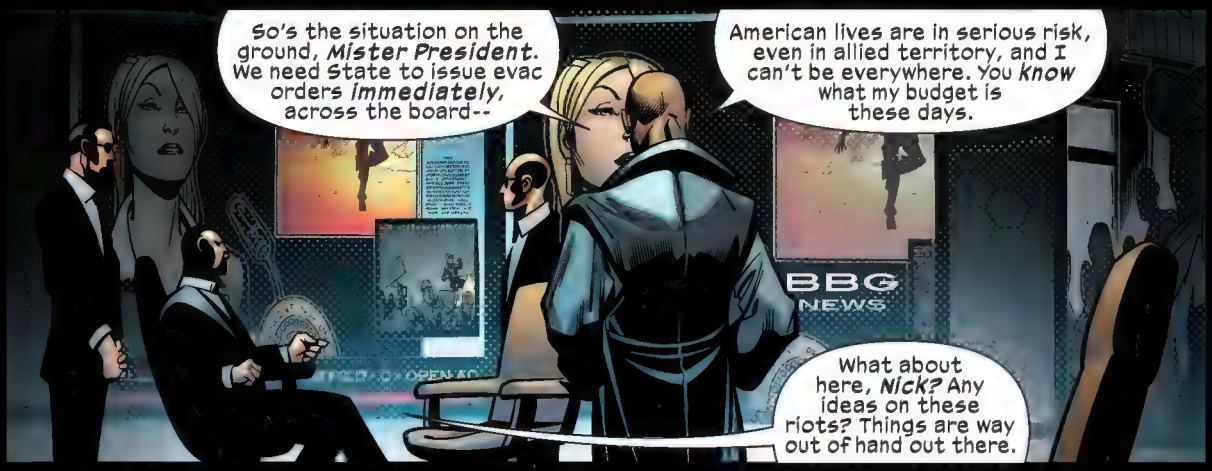

Jermaine--your question?
Many of the documents the Post cited, in referencing the facilities these first mutants were in--the living conditions, how they were treated--it's horrific stuff--
"Is the administration at all concerned about parallels to their newly opened Containment Centers?"
"Most of the journalists in this room have been inside those centers, Jermaine, including yourself.
"You know firsthand that mutants now in the government's care are being treated with dignity and compassion."
DANGER
VOLTAGE
"And what about the report from Human Rights Watch, which claims--"

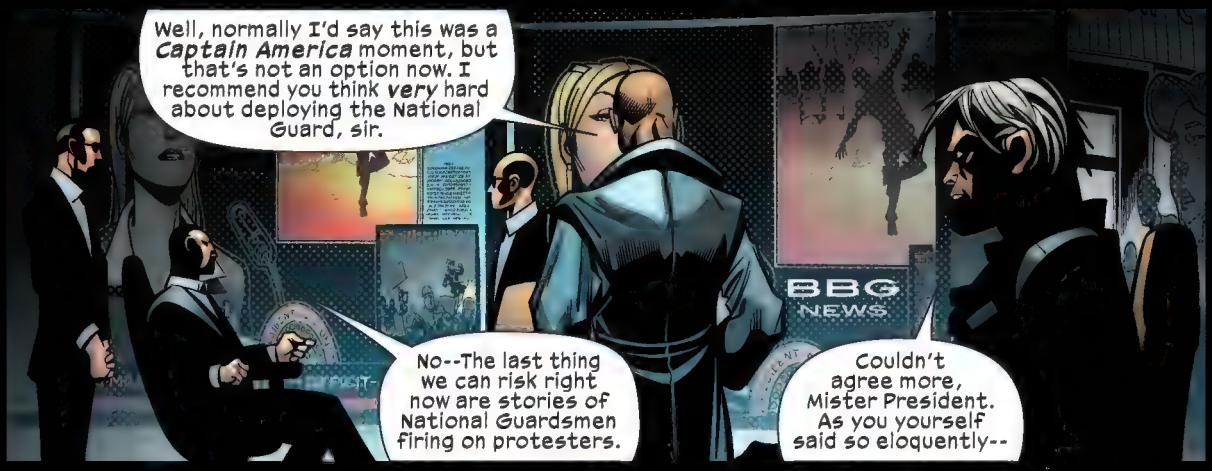
"I'm sorry, claims based on what? Secondhand accounts from widely discredited sources? I'm not going to respond to that.
"The fact is, most of the mutants in those centers are living in better conditions now than they were before they were admitted."
"Ms. Cooper, you say admitted, but most of them are being held there against their--"
Next question. Denise?

"Given the now-apparent culpability of this government in the creation of mutants, will you be re-assessing the '*apprehend or execute*' statute that's been in place since Magneto's attack?"
"Absolutely *not*.
"Rather than focus on who's to blame for mistakes made ***decades ago***, this President has to concern himself with the national security threats of ***today***.
"***Executive Order 3144*** has saved lives, human and mutant alike.
"We cannot--***we will not***--repeat the mistakes that led to Magneto's attack on New York.
"Not after all we've lost."

IDENTITY CONFIRMED: MARIAN CARLYLE, CODE NAME: ROGUE.
FREEZE.
"Next and last question. Joshua?"
"Do you have a response to the Speaker's remarks to the press?"
SEC
The Speaker makes a lot of remarks, you'll have to be clearer.
The one calling for the President to resign.
The Speaker would do well to remember that these documents detail events that occurred over a half-century ago--
And since then, there've been plenty of Presidents come and go on both sides of the aisle. Responsibility in this matter is a bipartisan affair, and we--
That's ducking the essence of the question, Valerie, and you know it.
Now, we've already been told you won't answer this--which I find insulting, by the way--but the American people deserve the truth...
Did the President know that man created mutants?

This is getting ugly, Mr. Fury.
BBG NEWS

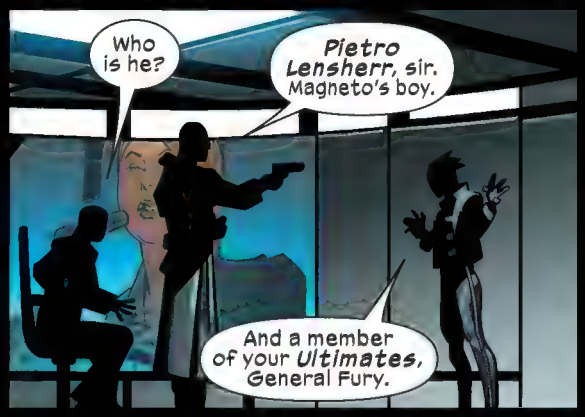

So's the situation on the ground, *Mister President*. We need State to issue evac orders *immediately*, across the board--
American lives are in serious risk, even in allied territory, and I can't be everywhere. You *know* what my budget is these days.
BBG NEWS
What about here, *Nick?* Any ideas on these riots? Things are way out of hand out there.


Well, normally I'd say this was a *Captain America* moment, but that's not an option now. I recommend you think *very* hard about deploying the National Guard, sir.
BBG NEWS
No--The last thing we can risk right now are stories of National Guardsmen firing on protesters.
Couldn't agree more, Mister President. As you yourself said so eloquently--

Violence is *not* a solution.

What in the hell?!
Sir, get down!
Freeze!
Gentlemen, please! I'm only here to--

Hands in the air, now!
Of course. Of course.
Please, gentlemen, calm down, please--I assure you, I didn't come here to hurt anyone. In fact, I came to help--


Who is he?
Pietro Lensherr, sir. Magneto's boy.
And a member of your Ultimates, General Fury.

Former member, you little--
Enough! Everyone, just settle--you said you came here to help, Mister Lensherr? Make your case now, before these men run out of patience and do their jobs.

Obviously, Mister President. And thank you. I apologize sincerely for such an abrupt entrance, but when I saw the news, and I realized how much danger you were in, well--
I got here just as quickly as I could.

It's funny what happens when everything changes.
For every mutant left standing, it meant something different.
Some wanted an *explanation*--to try and make sense of it all.
Some found themselves in even *worse trouble* than they were in *before*.
Some saw an *opportunity* in the midst of the chaos.
And then some--
Well, *some* of us just wanted to *hide*.
--admitting the U.S. government's involvement in creation of mutants--
Kitty, are you hearing this?

Yeah. I am. Turn it off. Or I put a hand through it.
But...this is history. This is like...the moon landing.
No, Bobby, this is like finding out they faked the moon landing.
Realize what this means?
Sorry?
Mutants got their powers through a science experiment! I got my powers through a science experiment! It's the same thing!
Ugh... no. Johnny, man, just...no.
What?
Dude... listening to Kanye does not make you black.
Whatever, I'm counting it.
Did you see this? Time Square's going nuts with these riots. They said six people are dead already. Somebody should--
Uh-uh. Stop right there!

Huh?
Stop right there! I know what you were gonna say.
What? Somebody should--
We can go visit Peter's grave in the morning.
Got it? Great. Now, I am gonna--
Oh man, Kitty...
Do something. Yeah. Somebody should. Not us.
You guys remember the deal, right? We stay here. In the Morlock tunnels. We two mutants and...whatever Johnny is. We go up once a day to get food and supplies 'til we figure out something more permanent.
We don't pretend to be super heroes. We don't use our powers. We keep our heads down, and we stick together. That was the deal when I let you guys crash here.
And if you two can't remember why we made that deal, well--
Seriously? Ten seconds ago. Not even.
Yeah, but this is--
No, it really isn't. Go away.
Kitty! Wait! It's--
I said NO!
If you asked me now, I honest to God don't know if I could tell you why.

We weren't really friends. I never trusted her, for one. We both kinda liked the same guy, then we didn't. I dunno. Makes things awkward.
Kitty, please, just--
Look!
I guess, if I had to say, what it comes down to is that we found out we weren't special anymore.
I mean, before that, no matter how much they hated us, no matter how much they hunted us, we all thought, deep down, it was because they were afraid of us. Or jealous, even, maybe.
It's Rogue.
We were God's chosen few. The next step in evolution. The children of tomorrow. No one could take that from us.
And then they did.
BUGLE
vs. MILITARY
X-Man Rogue id'ed as attacker
We found out we were a mistake. A sickness. A curse.
They weren't afraid of us. They weren't jealous.
They were ashamed of us.

And it's funny, you know, *but*-- when you find out something like that, horrible as it might be...
It's kind of *liberating* in a weird way.
When you find out you don't have a *destiny*, or a *mission*, suddenly you start to realize what you do have--
Each other.
Come on. We gotta move fast.
My name is *Kitty Pryde*. I'm sixteen years old--
And this is the story of how I became the most feared and hated terrorist in the history of the United States.

The more things *change*, right?
ULTIMATE COMICS
X-MEN
CHAPTER ONE
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SPECIAL THANKS TO JON MOISAN
TO BE CONTINUED...

ISSUE 02

ULTIMATE COMICS™

X-MEN®

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MEDINA
VLASCO
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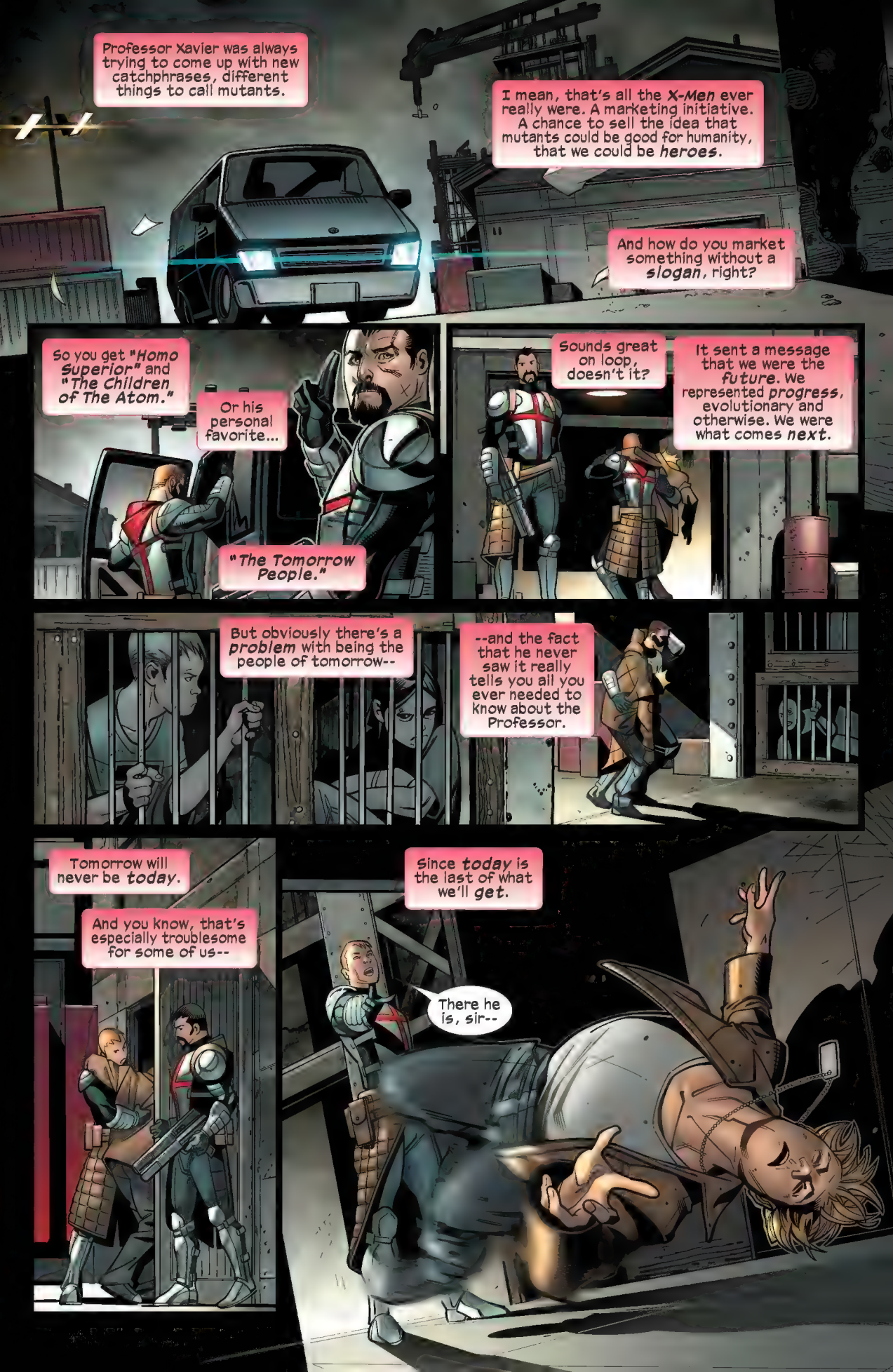

Professor Xavier was always trying to come up with new catchphrases, different things to call mutants.
I mean, that's all the X-Men ever really were. A marketing initiative. A chance to sell the idea that mutants could be good for humanity, that we could be heroes.
And how do you market something without a slogan, right?
So you get "Homo Superior" and "The Children of The Atom."
Or his personal favorite...
"The Tomorrow People."
Sounds great on loop, doesn't it?
It sent a message that we were the future. We represented progress, evolutionary and otherwise. We were what comes next.
But obviously there's a problem with being the people of tomorrow--
--and the fact that he never saw it really tells you all you ever needed to know about the Professor.
Tomorrow will never be today.
And you know, that's especially troublesome for some of us--
Since today is the last of what we'll get.
There he is, sir--

Found him right where you said we would, trying to hitchhike about a mile away from that motel.
And what about the motel itself?
Er, yeah-- about that, sir... we checked the room you said they'd be in. I'm afraid it was empty. They must have beat us to the--
No. No, it wasn't. She's playing games with your mind.
The telepath. Powerful, that girl. Should've gone myself.
All due, respect, sir, I know what I saw--
Um, who?
And I know what I saw, Donald. Or do you doubt me now?
Acck--N-no, sir--
Good. Remember, this is the gift He has given me--to see all the sins of man. To see them, to find them, to take hold of them--
And to purify them.
Y-yes, Reverend Stryker--

UNION SQUARE PARK. NEW YORK CITY.
MUTANT IDENTIFIED. MARIAN CARLYLE.
SURRENDER NOW. OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO ENGAGE PHYSICALLY--
Trust me, dude, as someone who's dated her...

THE HUMAN TORCH
That's really not a good idea.
Stop bragging.
Told you she was hot.
Rogue, you all right?
THE SHROUD
ICEMAN

Yeah, I--I'm okay. But guys... be careful. These Nimrods--
MUTANT IDENTIFIED. KATHERINE PRYDE.
MUTANT IDENTIFIED. ROBERT DRAKE.
SURRENDER NOW. OR WE WILL--
They know our names.
We're famous!
What about me?
Johnny, man, we've already been over this. You're not a mutant.
And I say it's up for debate. But then I guess that means I don't have to surrender?
Does appear to be a loophole.
Ah, see? Now everybody wins.

MUTANTS HAVE RESPONDED WITH AGGRESSION TO VERBAL REQUEST. USE OF LETHAL FORCE NOW PERMISSIBLE.
Didn't you just hear me? I said he's *not* a mutant! Whatever happened to due process?
ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY GIVEN TO US VIA EXECUTIVE ORDER 3144, YOU ARE HEREBY SENTENCED--
Ugh, wake me up when you build the hot blonde Cylon, for now you guys are just *annoying*.
Besides, you know, just because you *can* do something, doesn't mean you *should*. It's called *being the bigger robot*.
Guys, back off, I got this-- they're tech, probably won't like it much when I--
No, Kitty, *wait!*

OW!
What was *that?*
I couldn't phase through it...
I think they've got some kind of shield on them... a *power dampener*--
Oh, yeah?

Let's see them dampen *this*.
Time to impress the pretty southern lady.
FWOOOM
There, see--? No more weirdly angry-faced droid-things.
Just a nice night in the park, only about sixteen mil worth of property damage to answer for. Not a lot of room for improvement there.
I say we all call it a win and go--

NIMROD MODEL SENTINEL OPERATIONAL CAPACITY CHECK: 98 PERCENT.
This must be a really embarrassing moment for you.
Eh, I've had worse.
My turn, then?
No--fall back. These things are too tough--
Aw, come on, Kitty, haven't you ever seen a giant robot movie? Underneath that scary metal exterior is a confused, puppy-loving softie--
Just waiting for some nice boy to come along and take him on long walks in the forest.
Or stab him in the face with ice daggers.
One of the two.

You know, the thing is--I get why you guys would have a problem with her--I mean, she dumped me for some dude who was like *thirty*. *And* he had a lame accent.
But if I can grow and move past it, then so can--
Y--AGGHHHH!!!
I'm on it!
Bobby!
How *bad*?
I'm okay, it'll grow back... just *leaking*. Ugh...*Gross*.
This must be a really embarrassing moment for you.

Get him out of here. Meet up with us at the rendezvous point in twenty.
Sorry, the what?
It's on Bobby's phone.
Oh...right. Okay. But--what about you?
I'll get Rogue. I'm the one they can't hit, remember?
Kitty, we can't just--
I said go!
I can handle this.

One, two, three, four...
Five...
Six...
Seven, eight, nine, ten...

Wh--!

AYEEEE!

Ow!
THUD
Unff!
You're lucky I'm-- unff--wearing layers--
NEW YORK TIMES
You all right?
Unnff... y-yeah, I think so...
Good. Now--

What the hell were you thinking?!
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get anyone hurt...
The news said you started this. That you went nuts all over Port Authority, then made them chase you all the way to Union Square.
Did you?
I had to get their attention.
Get their...are you kidding me?! I don't know if you noticed this, but when we get their attention, they shoot at us! A bunch of times!
Kitty, hey, go easy--
I did--I did what I was told to. I'm really sorry...
Told to do? Sorry?!
Let's all just--
He told me to take the bus to New York...he told me they'd come after me.
Rogue, who told you?
He told me that they'd find me and that you would rescue me.
Who the hell told you to do this?!

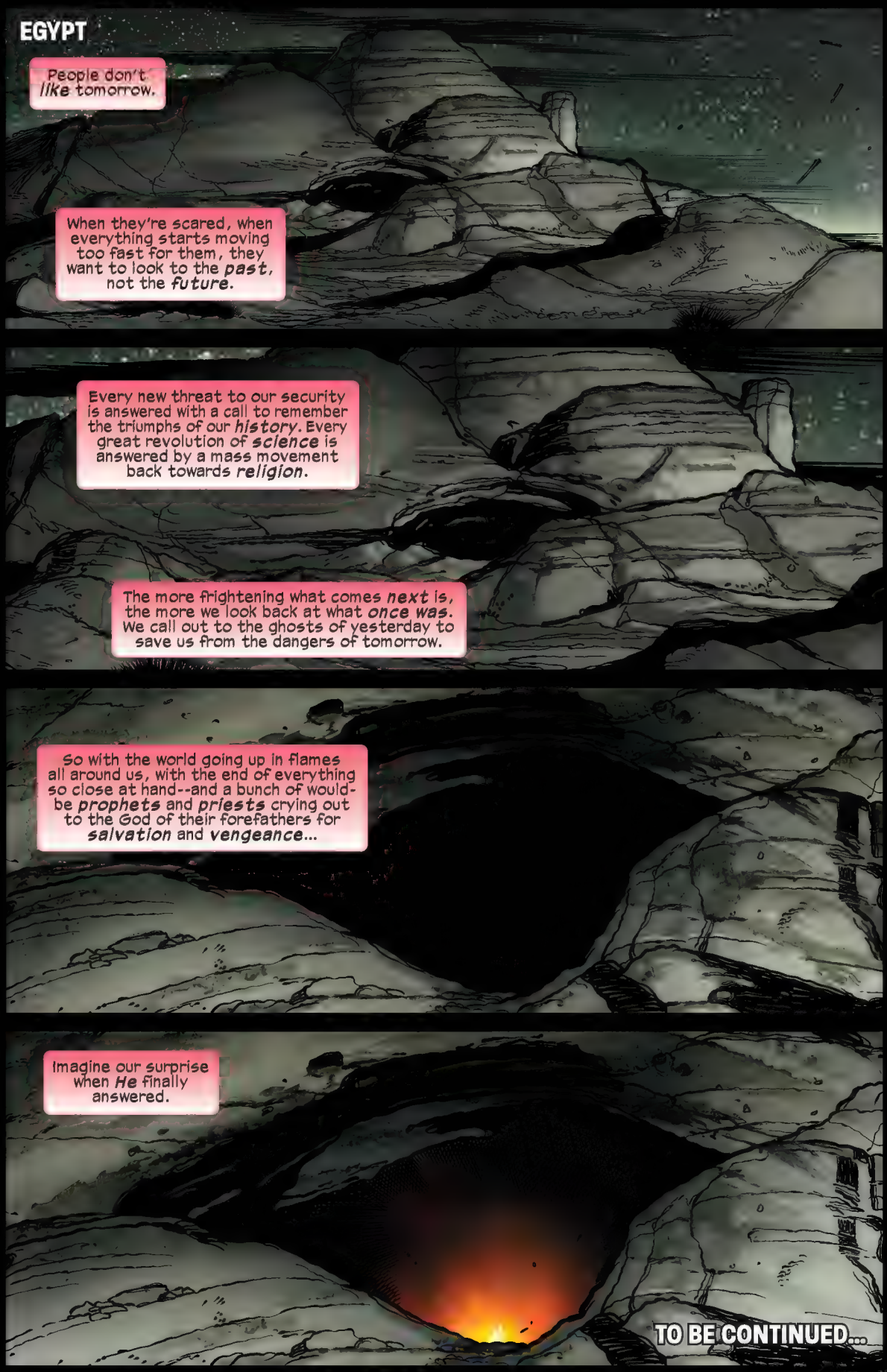
God.
God told me that you'd save me. That you'd save all of us, Kitty.
This is all a part of His plan.
Ha! Bobby dated a crazy chick.

NEW YORK, UPPER WEST SIDE
Elise Cartwright was always a little too much of a workaholic. A corporate lawyer--she never got married, never had any kids. But she liked life on her own, and she liked what she did.
She kept a small apartment in the city for the nights when work kept her out late enough to miss the last train back to New Jersey.
When Manhattan was flooded, she couldn't get back into the place for weeks. There were all these worries about the structural safety of the building, and the electrical work.
When she finally did get back in, she found two orphaned mutants, age fourteen, squatting, scared out of their minds. They'd been hiding in a crawlspace, only coming out in the middle of the night.
What should've been a quick call to the authorities became a cause for Elise.
She took the children in...and then came more. Nine in total--all mutants, all with nowhere to go after Magneto's attack.
So she gave them a place to sleep, kept them fed, and took a couple hours off work each day, playing mother and schoolteacher to them.
She didn't worry too much about the government finding them. She had money, after all, and she was smart.
She should've been worried about other things.
I--I know who you are.

Hm?
You're--you're Admiral Stryker's son. You're the one that attacked the Xavier school. I saw it on the news.
That's right.
I guess this is your thing, then? Hunting kids? That make you feel like a big man?
Hh. Not quite. Do you have any children, Elise?
I'm not going to--
Do you have any children?
I have nine.
Hh. Of course you do. But I mean the flesh and blood kind.
See, I was a preacher. Back before the wave. And I was so ashamed of my father and all that he did. To mutants, I mean. I thought he was a monster. A butcher.
Then I had a little boy of my own. And I swore up and down that I would teach him to be a kind man, a tolerant man. That I wouldn't be like my father, and I wouldn't raise John to be like him, either.
I didn't understand, until it happened. Until I saw my son floating dead in the water just a few blocks from here--
What a father will do to protect his own.
I'm not going to tell you where they are. And you'll never find them. So why don't you--
I'm sorry, Elise, but that just isn't true. I already know where they are--

I just wanted to give you the chance to atone for your sins.
Reverend Stryker, we found--

Hell.
What is it, son?
It's just-- w-we found the children. I don't understand it, but--they...
They were in the brownstone, out in Carroll Gardens. They were right where you *said* they would be, sir.
Of course they were. I've told you, before-- this is *God's will*, Nathan. You believe that now, don't you?
Y-yes...
Good. Then let's go get the rest of the men and make our way over to them. That'll be plenty. Remember--
This is all a part of His plan.
And now you get the other big problem with that whole "*Tomorrow People*" idea-- and it's got nothing to do with whether you're a mutant or not. See, the thing is--


EGYPT
People don't *like* tomorrow.
When they're scared, when everything starts moving too fast for them, they want to look to the ***past***, not the ***future***.
Every new threat to our security is answered with a call to remember the triumphs of our ***history***. Every great revolution of ***science*** is answered by a mass movement back towards ***religion***.
The more frightening what comes ***next*** is, the more we look back at what ***once was***. We call out to the ghosts of yesterday to save us from the dangers of tomorrow.
So with the world going up in flames all around us, with the end of everything so close at hand--and a bunch of would-be ***prophets*** and ***priests*** crying out to the God of their forefathers for ***salvation*** and ***vengeance***...
Imagine our surprise when ***He*** finally answered.
TO BE CONTINUED...

ULTIMATE COMICS™

X-MEN®

ISSUE 03

SPENCER
MEDINA
VLASCO
GRACIA

MARVEL

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THE WHITE HOUSE. WASHINGTON, D.C.

Pardon.
Hey, Dan. That was General Fury, right?
Indeed, ma'am.
He looks pissed.
Indeed, ma'am.
Hope it's not about those budget cuts I recommended for his department.
I doubt it, ma'am. At least not at the moment.
No? What's the problem now, then?
Er--best you see for yourself, ma'am.
That good, huh? Fantastic, I can hardly--
--wait.

Ah, there she is! Come on in--this is Valerie Cooper, my new advisor on mutant issues. Val, Have you met--
Pietro Lensherr. A pleasure, ma'am.
Wow, you're barely bigger than your file.
Have a seat, Val.
Absolutely. I imagine I'll need to get comfortable in order to hear the long story of how a terrorist didn't end up riddled with bullets the second he stepped onto the White House lawn.
Please, Valerie--
Ms. Cooper.
Ms. Cooper. If your men were to fire on me, I could be to South Africa and back before the bullet could reach its intended target--any number of times.
This place has other defenses. It has ever since your father attacked it.
And I am here only to add to them, I assure you. As I was telling your President--
You need to hear this.

Obviously, the events of the last twenty-four hours have left us all a bit shaken. Learning that your government had a hand in--no, was the driving force behind--the creation of mutants...
Well, I simply couldn't believe it. And immediately I thought of you, and the threats to this great office that would no doubt soon emerge.
The angry, perhaps militant responses from other nations. The riots.
Perhaps most frightening, the possibility of mutants themselves seeking retribution.
A most valid concern, I can assure you.
And that's not even to mention the political implications, which, while secondary, I'm certain you have--
Mister Lensherr--
Believe me, the appetizer of veiled threats and smug condescension is great, really, but how about we get to the meat of the conversation, yeah?
You have the leader of the free world's ear, now try mine.

Of course, *of course*. You're a *very* important woman, I hardly wish to waste your time. My point is, all these new threats...
They come from all sides. And so many of your security measures are *reactionary*, or *defensive*, in nature.
If *only* the technology existed to help you track and identify these threats as they *emerge*. To empower you to act *proactively*, and *decisively*. Tell me, Ms. Coooper--
Do you know what a *Cerebro* is?

TIMES SQUARE.
We used to come down here on Saturdays. After dark. I hated it. Always so full of tourists. But she loved the lights.
WASHINGTON, D.C.
LOS ANGELES.
Look what your lies have done to us.
CHICAGO.
Sir, the snipers are in position.
NEW YORK CITY.
Mm? Good. Very good.
On my word, then, gentlemen--
Let's take our country back.

THE MORLOCK TUNNELS, BENEATH NEW YORK CITY.
Kitty, please, just listen--
No, Rogue, you listen to me--
God didn't tell you to do this. God didn't tell you to do anything. You're--I dunno--post-traumatic or something.
It was bound to happen to one of us, with everything that's gone down this year...
That's not what this is. Bobby, tell her--
Nooo way--I am not getting dragged into this.
Ooh, yeah, ex-girlfriend fight, scary stuff.
Scary, kinda sexy stuff.
Look, you can stay here tonight, until we can figure out how to...get you some help or something. In the meantime, try to sleep off the crazy.
CRRRK
CRRK

I'm not crazy. I can prove it, I just need you to--
CRRRRK CRRRRK
Sssh-- you guys hear that?
Yeah. Johnny, lights.
Sure, one--
Gah!
WHOA!
Hi. Are you the Morlocks?
Just a kid, dude.
Scared the crap outta me...
How did you get in here?
My friend said the Morlocks live here. Is that you?
Ha! "Secret Hideout."
Kid, how did you get down here? Is there anyone else--
Is that some kinda tail--

RAAAAAARRRRRR!!!
AAAAAAHHHH!!!
Don't worry--that's my brother, Joshua. He won't hurt you. So are you the Morlocks or not?
Not. Not exactly.
Okay, well, whoever you are--
Can you help my friend, Jimmy...?

"...He almost died saving me and Joshua."

7

"Oh good, he's up..."

AHHHH!!!
...I can have my bed back.
Johnny, not now--
Kitty?
Um... Yeah?
Good to see you agai-hnn...
Whoa, easy, man--
Where am I...?
Don't worry about that right now. What happened to you?
Is the kid okay?
He's fine. He's asleep.
Uh, I don't think you should go anywhere, man--you lost a lot of blood...you know, all over my bed.
The others... we--we gotta go back for them--

You don't understand! He's gonna kill 'em!
Hold up--kill who?
He's rounding us up... got a bunch of mutants in cages, said he's gonna *kill 'em*...said he wants the whole world to watch--
Please, come on, gimme a hand--we gotta go, ain't got much time...
Hold on--*who?* Who did this?
Mean bastard, looked like a Sentinel with skin. Said his name was--
--said his name was *Stryker*.
Now.

BELL LABS
LOUISVILLE
VENICE
VENICE
LCNLEE
TAXI
LANE
FIRE

O Babylon the great, how you have fallen...

Your sins are so many--
And you have strayed so far from the truth.
Now heed the word of the Lord.
TO BE CONTINUED...

ULTIMATE COMICS™

X-MEN®

ISSUE 04

SPENCER MEDINA VLASCO GRACIA

MARVEL

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NEW YORK CITY.
THE DAY OF MAGNETO'S ATTACK.

Oh, for God's sake--

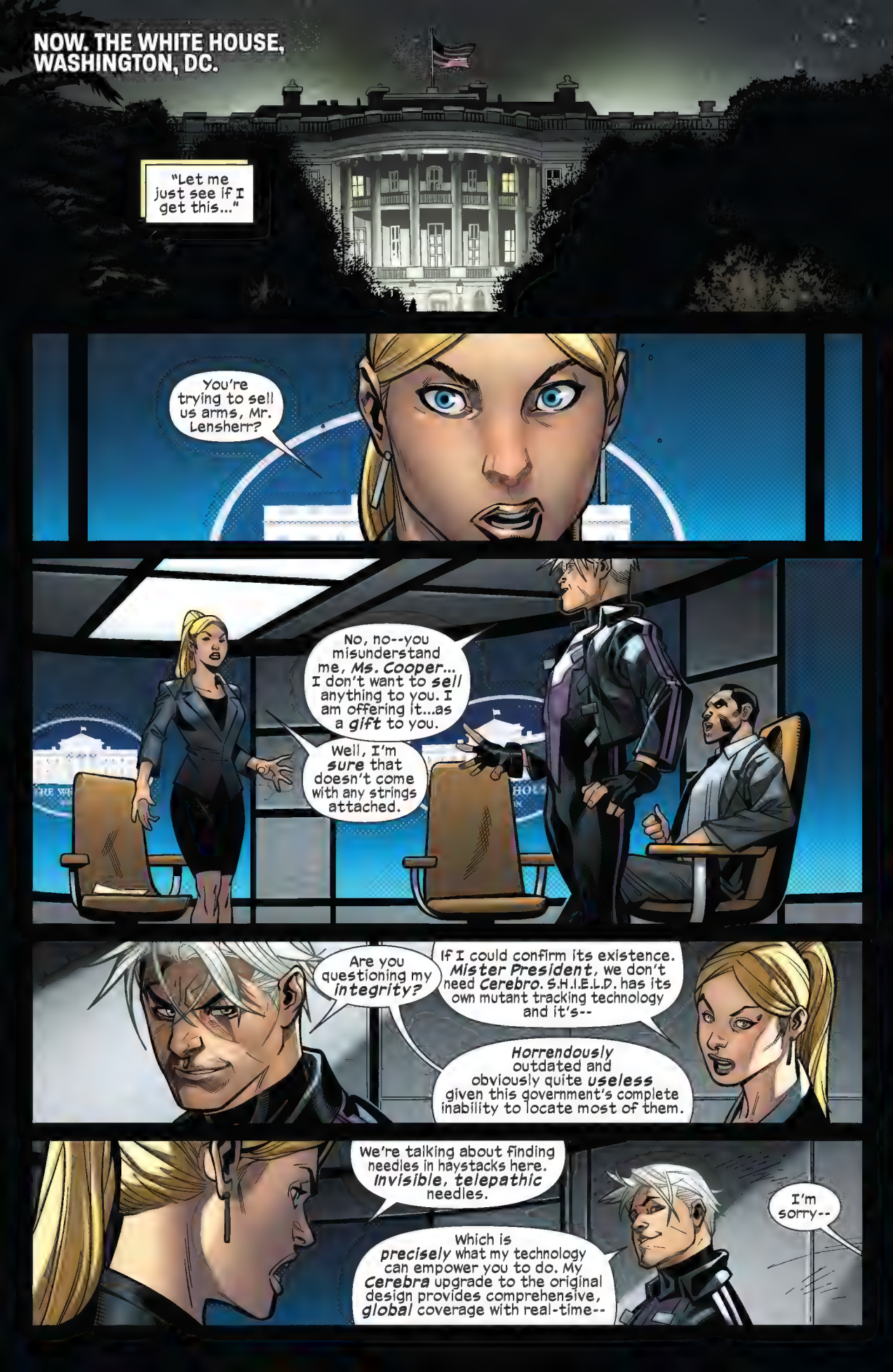
--Get up, boy.
Dad--? Is it--Is it really you--
Hello, William. You look like you've seen better days.
Dad--oh God, they--they killed John...they killed Kate... they took everything...
That right?
Dad, please...I don't know what to do...th-they're gone...it hurts too much...please...tell me what to do...
What should you do?
What should you do?

Man up, soldier!!!
You know, you almost had me impressed for a second there. Getting together with them other fellas, putting on that armor, taking the fight to this place--I thought to myself, "Hell, *there's* that son of mine!"
Now look at you. Some little girl punches you back, and you come crying home?
Surprised they didn't send your mother so you could get your damn feeding.
What do you do?! You find their wives, you find their sons and daughters, you give them some of what they gave you! And then some!
Damn shame you ain't got the *spine* to lay down something like that, *right?*
But don't you worry, boy. God sent me here with a mission, and I aim to follow his instructions to the *letter.* No, don't you worry *one bit,* Willy-boy--

"I'll make a man of you, yet."
CRACK
Reverend Stryker?
Yes?
They're ready, sir.

I gotta tell you--we're all real excited to hear you speak, sir--some of the folks here are like you, lost loved ones in the flood and what not. But then you, and those other men--hitting the Xavier school that same night, well...it's just inspiring to groups like ours. Fighting back, you know?
Hh. How many men do you have here?
Well, we're like most places--saw a big increase after the last election, then a bigger one after Magneto's attack.
Total membership these days is around four hundred--but between you and me, I'd say only about two hundred of 'em are real believers.
Then, you know, we got all of the families living here at the compound. And some of them, well--push come to shove, you'd rather give some of those wives the guns, right?
So, it's complicated, is what I'm--
And what is the arms situation?
We protect our rights pretty damn well. Got plenty of guys with all the way clean records, no lists--they go down and hit the shows every weekend. Some good chemists, too.
I can take you over to see the armory after your sermon, if you want.
But sir, you don't mind me asking...we've all heard the rumors--about Abilene. The miracles, I mean, is it true?
You mean that I can heal them?
Yes. Yes, it's true.
But signs and wonders are not what matter--

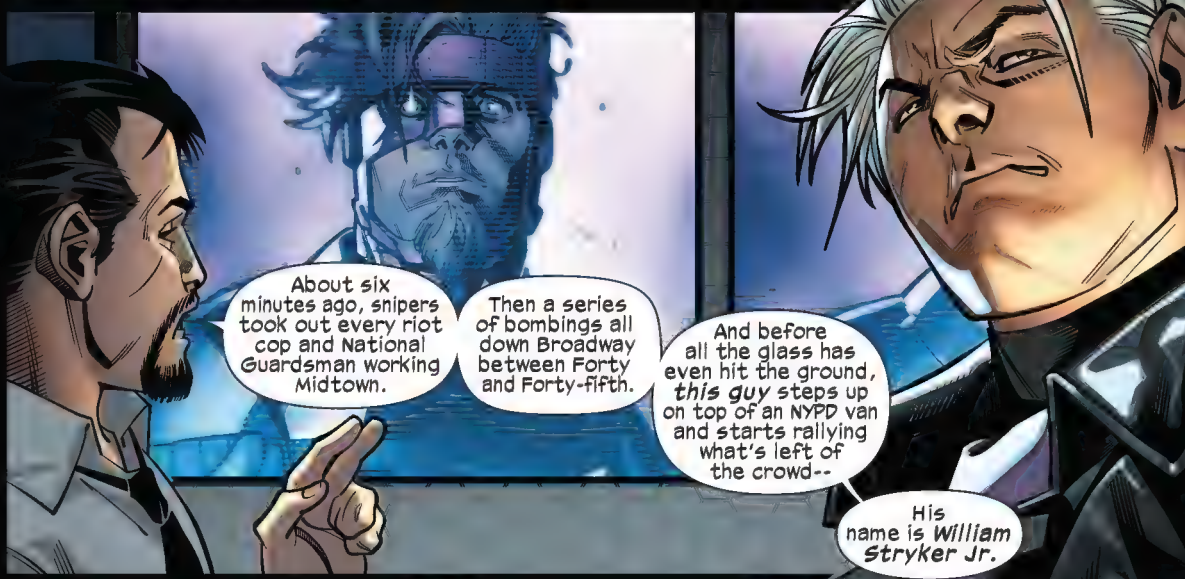
TIMES SQUARE. NOW.
LICE
He has called me to a higher purpose than that.


NOW. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC.
"Let me just see if I get this..."
You're trying to sell us arms, Mr. Lensherr?
No, no--you misunderstand me, Ms. Cooper... I don't want to sell anything to you. I am offering it...as a gift to you.
Well, I'm sure that doesn't come with any strings attached.
Are you questioning my integrity?
If I could confirm its existence. Mister President, we don't need Cerebro. S.H.I.E.L.D. has its own mutant tracking technology and it's--
Horrendously outdated and obviously quite useless given this government's complete inability to locate most of them.
We're talking about finding needles in haystacks here. Invisible, telepathic needles.
Which is precisely what my technology can empower you to do. My Cerebra upgrade to the original design provides comprehensive, global coverage with real-time--
I'm sorry--

Mister President--
Philip, what the hell?!

I'm sorry to interrupt, sir, but--it's Times Square--you need to see it for yourself--
It--It's more than that, sir--
Is this about the riots? I already--

He stays. What am I looking at?
Mister Lensherr, perhaps in light of this we should reschedule to a more appropriate--
To the contrary, Ms. Cooper, I believe this is exactly the right time for such a discussion to take place, and whatever new threat to security may have emerged here, only confirms the need--

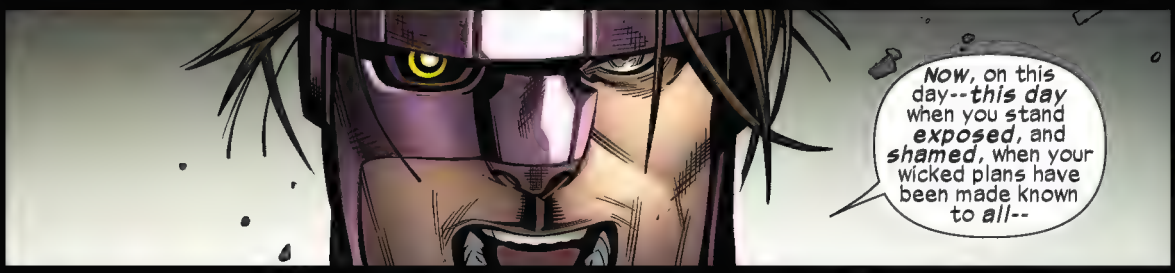

About six minutes ago, snipers took out every riot cop and National Guardsman working Midtown.
Then a series of bombings all down Broadway between Forty and Forty-fifth.
And before all the glass has even hit the ground, this guy steps up on top of an NYPD van and starts rallying what's left of the crowd--
His name is William Stryker Jr.

I do not *hate* mutants!
God taught me to *love*.
To love *all* of his creations--even the ones that would harm me and my family. Even the ones who would desire to *destroy* this *once-great* country.
But what I do hate--with all my being, with all my heart and soul, is the *sin* that made them.
The sin of *arrogance!* The sin of *conceit!*
When man built his tower, reaching high unto the heavens, *God* looked down and saw what he did, and scattered his children to all the ends of the earth, and divided them with *language*--
And yet *still* he builds.
Still he builds, always trying to reach that place, always attempting to *usurp!* To *corrupt!*
To reject the care and comfort of his father to make his own, *twisted* way!
We always want what we should not have.
We always *demand* that which we never earned.

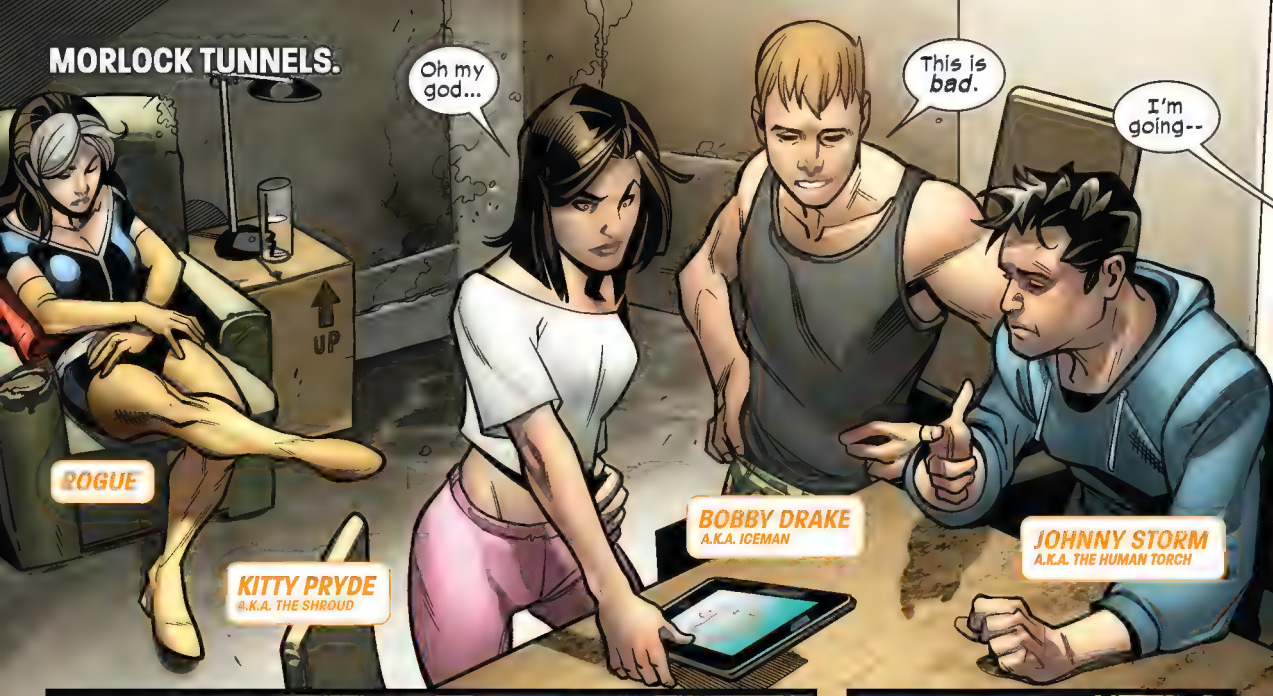
But God has given me a *message* to deliver--
A message to the kings of this world!

He has *seen* your transgressions!
He has *seen* all that you have done.

In your hubris, on your thrones in your castles, you *plotted*. You said I will make myself *like* the most high!
And so you poisoned your own *children*. And so you placed your idols inside that temple most sacred.


Now, on this day--*this day* when you stand *exposed*, and *shamed*, when your wicked plans have been made known to *all*--

RAMONES
Today he would judge you for what you have done.


MORLOCK TUNNELS.
Oh my god...
This is bad.
I'm going--
UP
ROGUE
KITTY PRYDE
A.K.A. THE SHROUD
BOBBY DRAKE
A.K.A. ICEMAN
JOHNNY STORM
A.K.A. THE HUMAN TORCH

You guys coming or not?
Yeah.
Wow, he heals fast.
No.
JIMMY HUDSON

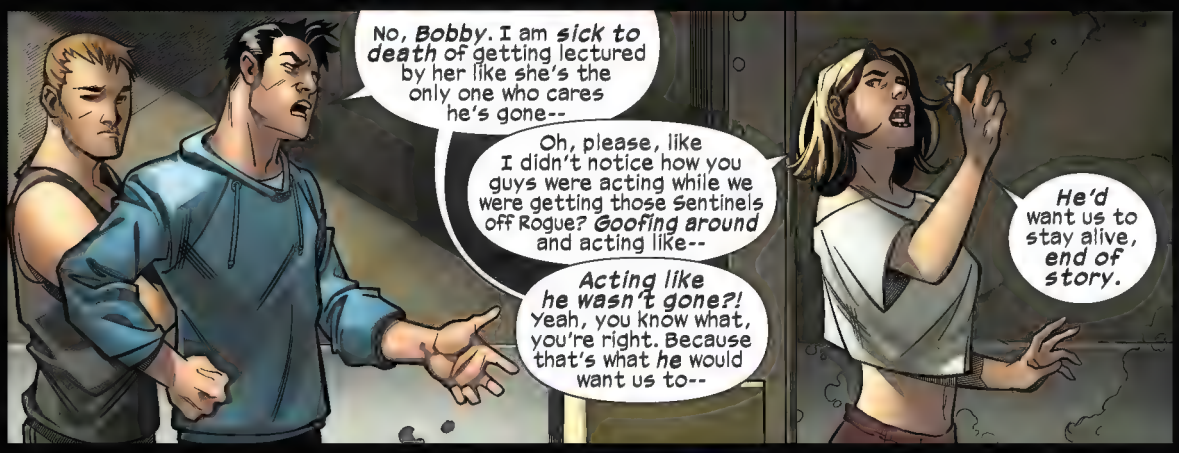
Are you serious?
Are you?

Kitty, it looks like he's got about a hundred mutants in those trucks--he's gonna kill them...
And that's awful. I know it is. But there's nothing we can do about it.
What do you mean there's nothing we can do about it? We can kick his--

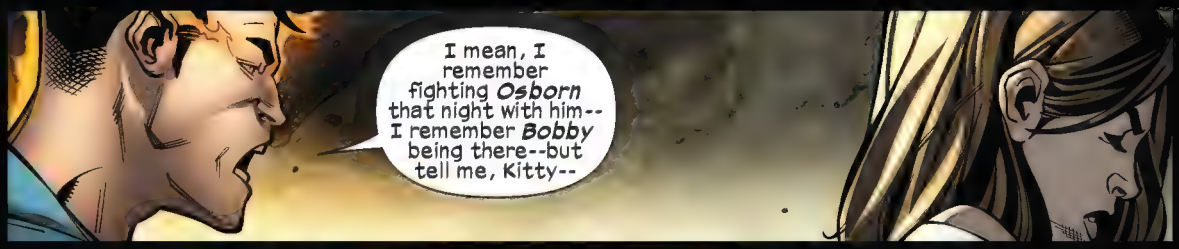
No! No, we can't! Or hey, maybe we can with this one, but not the next one, or the one after that--
Bottom line, eventually, this stupid game where we pretend the hero always wins and everyone gets to walk away? It ends.
And when it does, we have to bury someone.

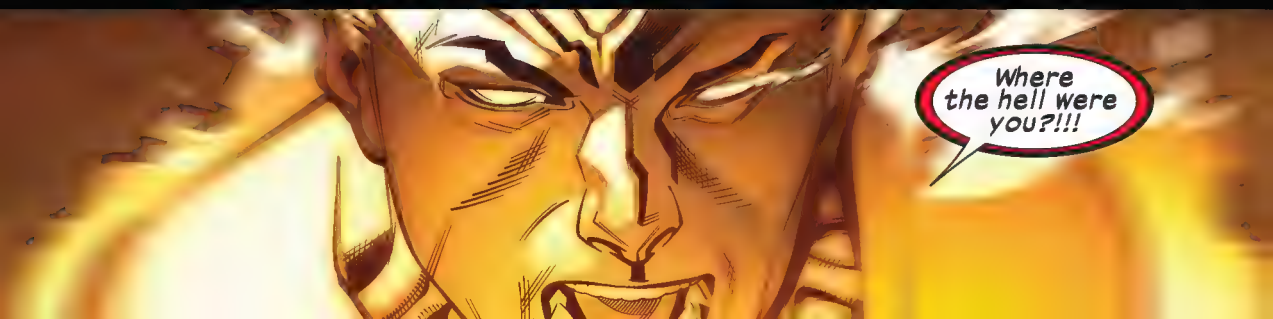
Just like we did with Peter.

Sorry, "we"?
What did you just say?
Johnny, easy--

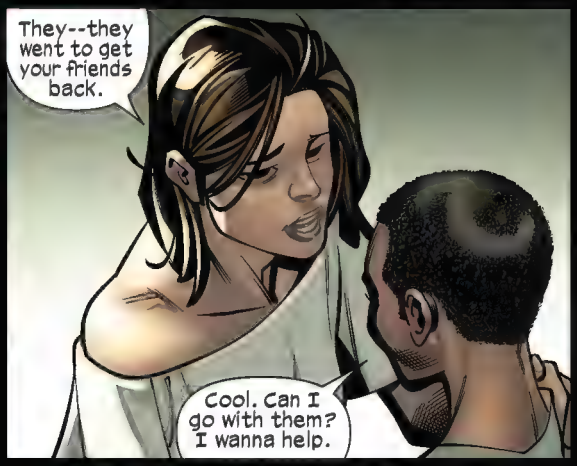

No, Bobby. I am sick to death of getting lectured by her like she's the only one who cares he's gone--
Oh, please, like I didn't notice how you guys were acting while we were getting those Sentinels off Rogue? Goofing around and acting like--
Acting like he wasn't gone?! Yeah, you know what, you're right. Because that's what he would want us to--
He'd want us to stay alive, end of story.

Oh, really?! And you know so well--
Johnny, come on, man--
No--I wanna hear this! How do you know so well what he wanted when he died?


I mean, I remember fighting Osborn that night with him--I remember Bobby being there--but tell me, Kitty--


Where the hell were you?!!!

What was that noise?
Sorry, kiddo--did we wake you two up?
It's cool. Where did everyone go?


They--they went to get your friends back.
Cool. Can I go with them? I wanna help.

No--no, they'll be fine. You should let the older kids handle this, okay?
Why don't you go with them, then?

Because I'm scared.
You shouldn't be scared. Jimmy can beat him up.
I hope so.
And besides, the bad man would never hurt that white-haired girl.
Yeah? Why not?
Because he thinks she's his friend. I saw them talking back at the place they kept us at.
He likes her.
Wait-- what?

There was a man brought to The Lord--a paralytic, carried to the Lord on a *cot* by his friends.
When the Savior saw him, he was moved so deeply by their faith--He told the man, "*take heart, son--your sins have been forgiven.*"
And the teachers of the law were angered at the Son--*blasphemy*, they said. Only *God* can forgive sin, they said.
And the Savior *knew* their thoughts, and said to them, which is easier? To forgive this man his sins, or to *heal* him?
And so the Lord turned to the man and told him to take up his bed and *walk*.
And this is *our* calling now. They will tell us we cannot be forgiven this sin--this sin that destroys our cities and slays our children--that our robes cannot be made clean.
They will not believe--
So we must *show* them God's power.
But first we must be made whole here, *together!* Before we may witness to the world, we must make *secure* our place in the eyes of the Lord!
Who here would like to be *saved?*
Who here is like that man who was carried unto The Lord? I can *feel* your presence--and I know you can hear *his* voice--listen to it, listen to what it tells you...
Come forward, come to his altar, and talk to him--
Yes, young lady, come forward, be *healed* today--
Please...

I want to be forgiven.
TO BE CONTINUED...

ULTIMATE COMICS™

X-MEN®

ISSUE 05

SPENCER MEDINA VLASCO CURIEL

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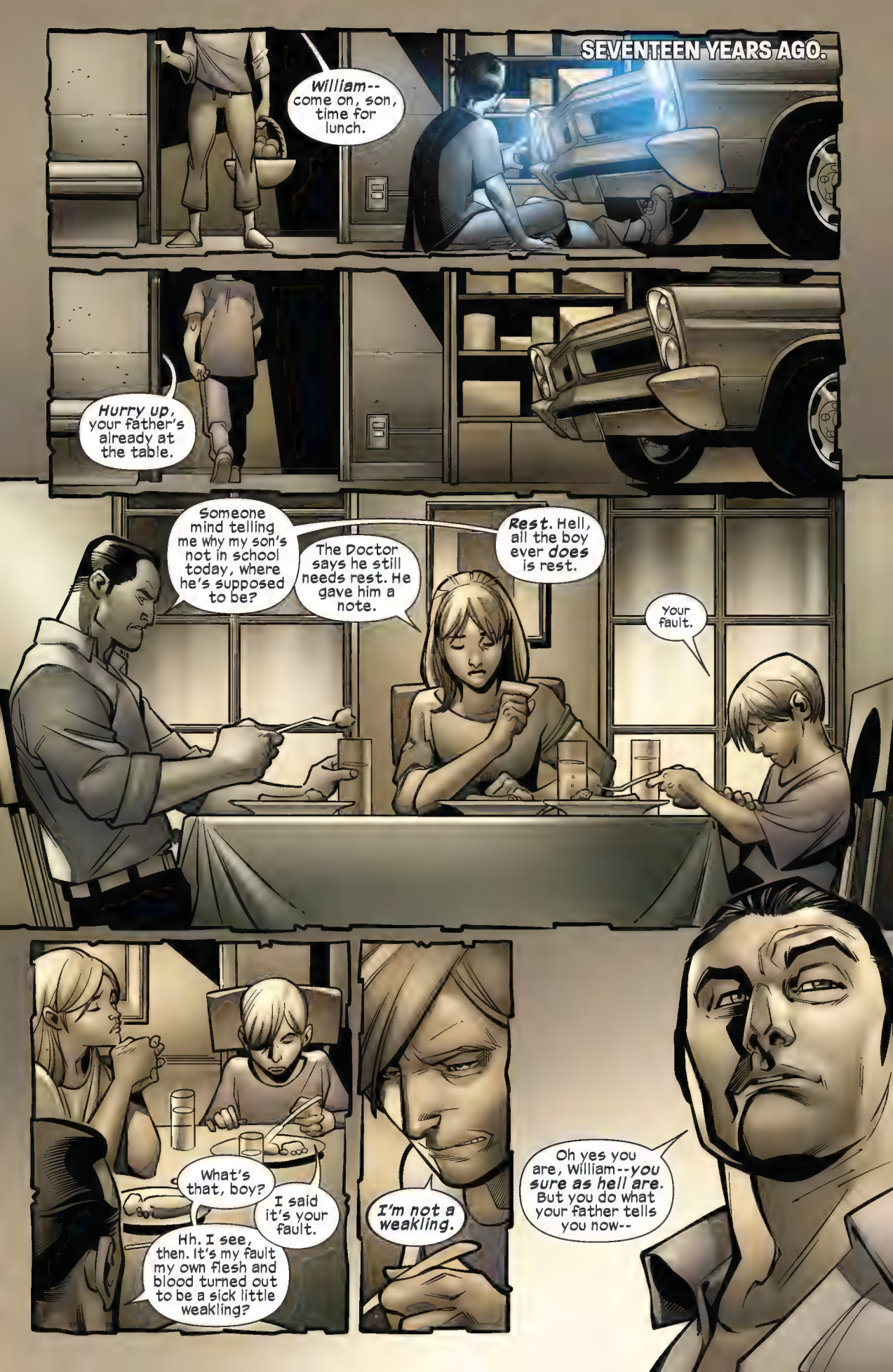

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO.
William-- come on, son, time for lunch.
Hurry up, your father's already at the table.
Someone mind telling me why my son's not in school today, where he's supposed to be?
The Doctor says he still needs rest. He gave him a note.
Rest. Hell, all the boy ever does is rest.
Your fault.
What's that, boy?
I said it's your fault.
Hh. I see, then. It's my fault my own flesh and blood turned out to be a sick little weakling?
I'm not a weakling.
Oh yes you are, William--you sure as hell are. But you do what your father tells you now--

TIMES SQUARE. NOW.
"And I will make you strong."
They say we should trust them! They say they know what is best, these so-called "leaders."
These same men who created this--these same men whose sin caused all this...
The fruits of their evil killed millions, right here where we stand! And now?!
Now they say we should put them in camps! Spend billions feeding them and caring for them while our own people die cold in the streets!
Why? So that one day they can tell us again that what they are is normal! That we should accept them. That we can trust them!
That's what they want! And they won't stop until we haven't just accepted them--they won't stop until we become them! Until our minds are so twisted by their perversions that we can't even tell the difference.
Put them in camps?!
I say bring them to me!

Listen, man--whatever you think I did to you, I'm sorry, okay? We all are. Please--I'll do whatever you want... just don't hurt me--

I see. Very well, then--

Be healed.

HURRKKK--!

UCKK-- no--

gn--

M-My skin-- What did you do to my skin?
Made your body *clean*.
What have you done to me?!
And now this--this is what troubles me...
Oh God... no...
For a man to be able to look at his sin, with his own two eyes, and yet--
Still he does not repent.

THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM.
WASHINGTON, D.C.
This is bad.
Stryker... Where do I know the name from?
Couple places. His father was in the Joint Chiefs years back.
That's not it.
No, it isn't. Junior here lost his wife and son in Magneto's attack on New York--
How very unfortunate.
It is. Except for the part where afterwards, he and a bunch of other angry survivors grab some discarded Sentinel tech and use it to hit the Xavier school. Not sure what happened to him after that, though--
I checked up. FBI and Southern Party Law Center have both been keeping an eye on the guy after that. He's been making the rounds, talking to various militia and human supremacy groups--
Preaching about mutant healing--which I guess we can all see isn't just rhetoric...
Why the hell hasn't he been in any of my reports?
All due respect, sir, you don't read the reports. And even if you did, this guy wasn't a big enough blip on the radar to warrant Presidential attention.
And yet now, here he is. What an exemplary job of intelligence gathering.
Okay, that's it--Mr. Lensherr, I really think it's time for you to excuse yourself. This Cerebra conversation can wait for a day when we have room on the schedule for murderous psychopaths.
Oh, to the contrary, I'm afraid, Ms. Cooper. Mister President, if I may--

You appear to be staggeringly incompetent.
Your administration is facing its gravest threat. This isn't like the flood--on this, your people will demand you accept full responsibility. They will not rally around you this time.
Within hours, your government has admitted it is responsible for the creation of mutants, and allowed a domestic terrorist to launch a major attack on your biggest city. Within hours. Quite frankly, sir, the case is easy to make--
Pietro, I get that--but there are things beyond my control here, and I expect people to understand--
They won't.
I can't just--
Yes, Mister President--Yes, you can.
We can bring Cerebra online now, and connect the emergent database with your Nimrod Sentinel fleet.
Overnight, I can personally guarantee the apprehension of nearly three-quarters of the Homo Superior populace of the United States.
Tonight? You're insane. Just getting the technology here would take--
Behind you.

Where the hell did *that* come from?!
I just went back to Wundagore to retrieve it. I hope you don't mind.
You can't *seriously*--
Mister President, for the entirety of your term, you have appeared *weak*...the victim of external forces, perhaps, but *weak* all the same. *Out of your depth.*
I am offering you now the silver bullet you've spent countless sleepless nights praying for. The ability to change the outcome of *everything*.
All it takes is a little *decisive action*. Dispatch your Sentinels to deal with this *Stryker* fellow--he's just a small man taking advantage of a moment of confusion, after all. Then activate Cerebra.
The world will see a leader who has answered adversity *once and for all*. A leader who takes *responsibility* for the mistakes and failings of his government, and puts forward a *solution*.
They will see the *challenges*--but they will also see that *you* met them.
Save your Presidency. *Save your country.*
Don't do this.
Please excuse us, Valerie.

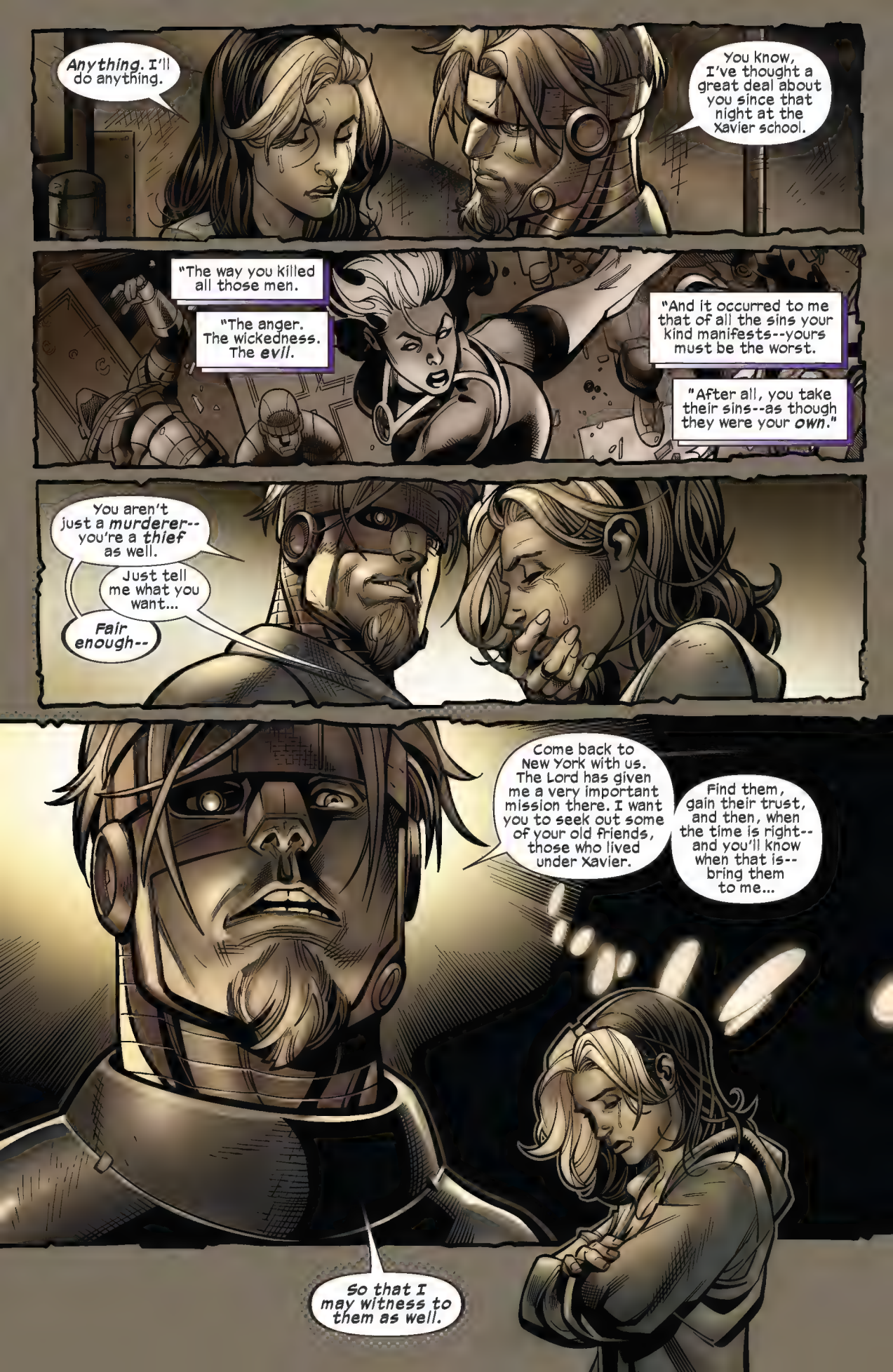
He's in his head somehow.
You mean literally? I thought WorldWide Solutions had set this whole place up with safeguards against telepaths.
They did. I-- I don't know. But something isn't right.
Get me everything you've got on this guy.
Lensherr, or Stryker?
Lensherr first. And move fast.
No, Philip, wait--
Huh?
Stryker first.
None of this is happening by chance.

TIMES SQUARE.
Another! Bring me another so that the world may see.
Theresa! No! Let her go!
Hh. Hello, child. Will you be forgiven?
Stab yourself in the face.
Come again?
I said--
Stab yourself in the face.
Hey! I know you!
Afraid your serpent's tongue won't work on me, little girl. Now close your eyes--

Pretty sure my grandma used to send you fifty bucks of her social security every month-- back when you were on cable.
BOBBY DRAKE
A.K.A. ICEMAN
Is that a soulpatch?
JOHNNY STORM
A.K.A. THE HUMAN TORCH
ROGUE
Let 'em go, Stryker.
JIMMY HUDSON

Well, look at that--you finally come back to me. And here I was genuinely beginning to worry...
Have to say, though, I am disappointed. Thought you'd bring more with you.
Brought enough--plan to do most of the work on you myself, though.
Does he really think it's gonna take more than four of us? He's a dude wearing the Windows version of Iron Man.
Hm? Oh. No, boy, you misunderstand--
I wasn't talking to you.

TWO WEEKS AGO.
Quite a stunt you pulled back there, showing up at the tent revival like that.
Most of these people, if they knew who you were--knew you were a *mutant*, even--they'd tear you apart piece by piece.
I can take care of myself.
You sure can. But from the way you look right now, I don't think you'd even put up a *fight*. Now why is that?
No need. I know you heard His voice.
I--
It's true, then?
That I could heal you? The Lord has given me many gifts.
Please...
Hold girl--
First you must *repent*.
I do. *I do repent.* I know this is a sin...I know what I *am* is a sin. I just want it to end.
And it could. But with *deeds*, not words.


Anything. I'll do anything.
You know, I've thought a great deal about you since that night at the Xavier school.
"The way you killed all those men.
"The anger. The wickedness. The evil.
"And it occurred to me that of all the sins your kind manifests--yours must be the worst.
"After all, you take their sins--as though they were your own."
You aren't just a murderer--you're a thief as well.
Just tell me what you want...
Fair enough--
Come back to New York with us. The Lord has given me a very important mission there. I want you to seek out some of your old friends, those who lived under Xavier.
Find them, gain their trust, and then, when the time is right--and you'll know when that is--bring them to me...
So that I may witness to them as well.

Um, what's he talking ab--
I'm sorry.
ARRGGGH!
What the hell, I thought you were--
HRRK!

Slinked away from me one time, creature. Doesn't mean you get to do it *again*...
NO!
That's not the deal. We made a promise. Before God.
Indeed we did, little girl.
Well, then?
You only get them if you heal me. That's what we agreed to.
Please...
Say it.
Forgive me.
You know, Rogue, maybe I'm getting things mixed up here, but--

I'm pretty sure you're asking that from the wrong guy.
Kitty, no--!

Engage Sentinels.

William Stryker's file, ma'am.
Thanks, Dave.

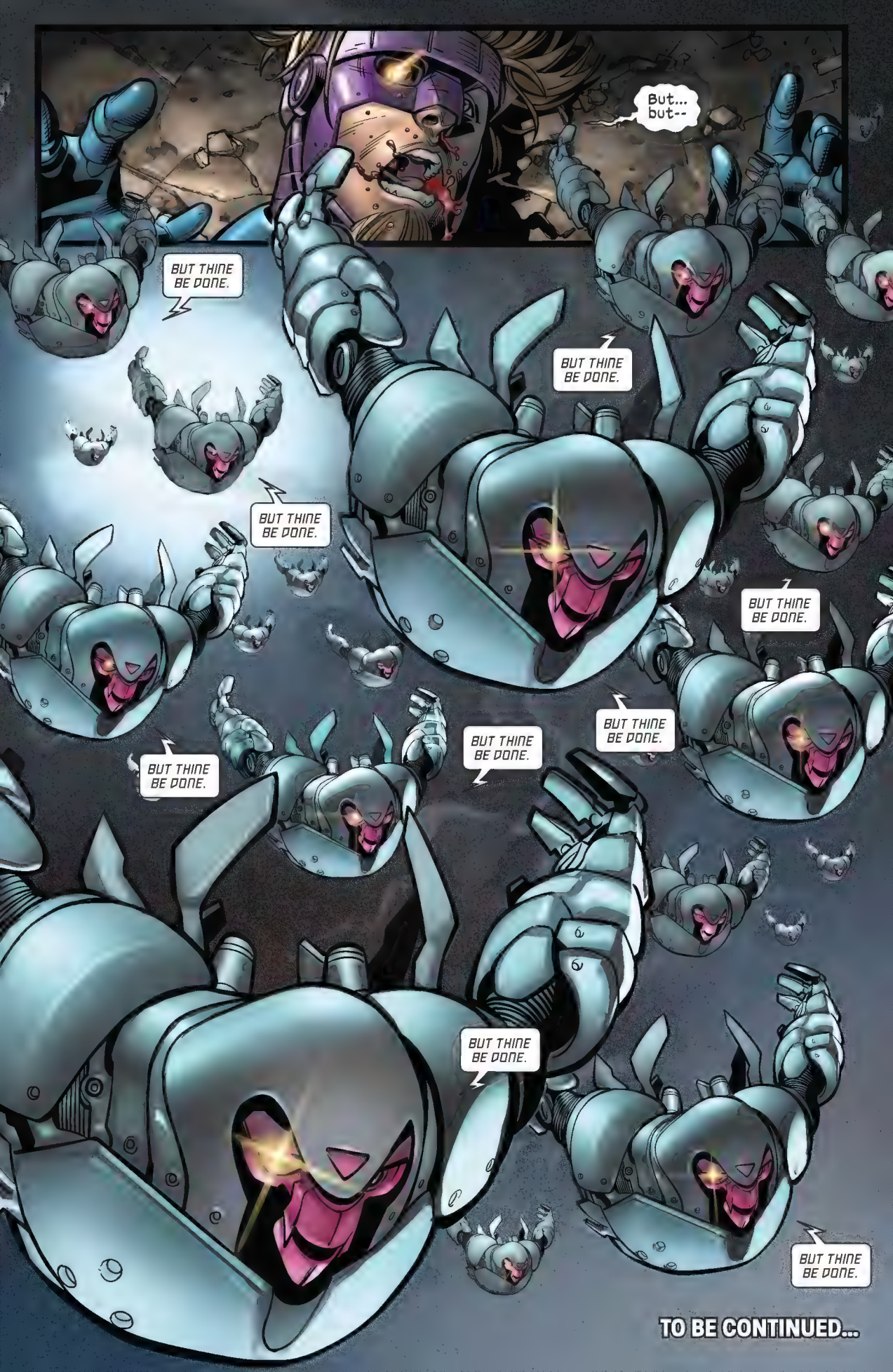
Activating the Cerebra now.

Oh hell.

There they are. All your many mutants.
Incredible. I had no idea there were so many...
A Homo Superior Nation. And I give them to you...
Cerebra is uploading to your fleet as we speak.
Nice suit.

AGGHHH!!!
No!
He's a mutant!

Father, if you are willing... take this cup from me...
What the hell?
Stryker. He's a mutant. His old man kept him doped up so he wouldn't know. Told him he was sick. It's in his medical records.
...What was his gift?
He can talk to--he can control machines.
Yet not my will...


But... but--
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
BUT THINE BE DONE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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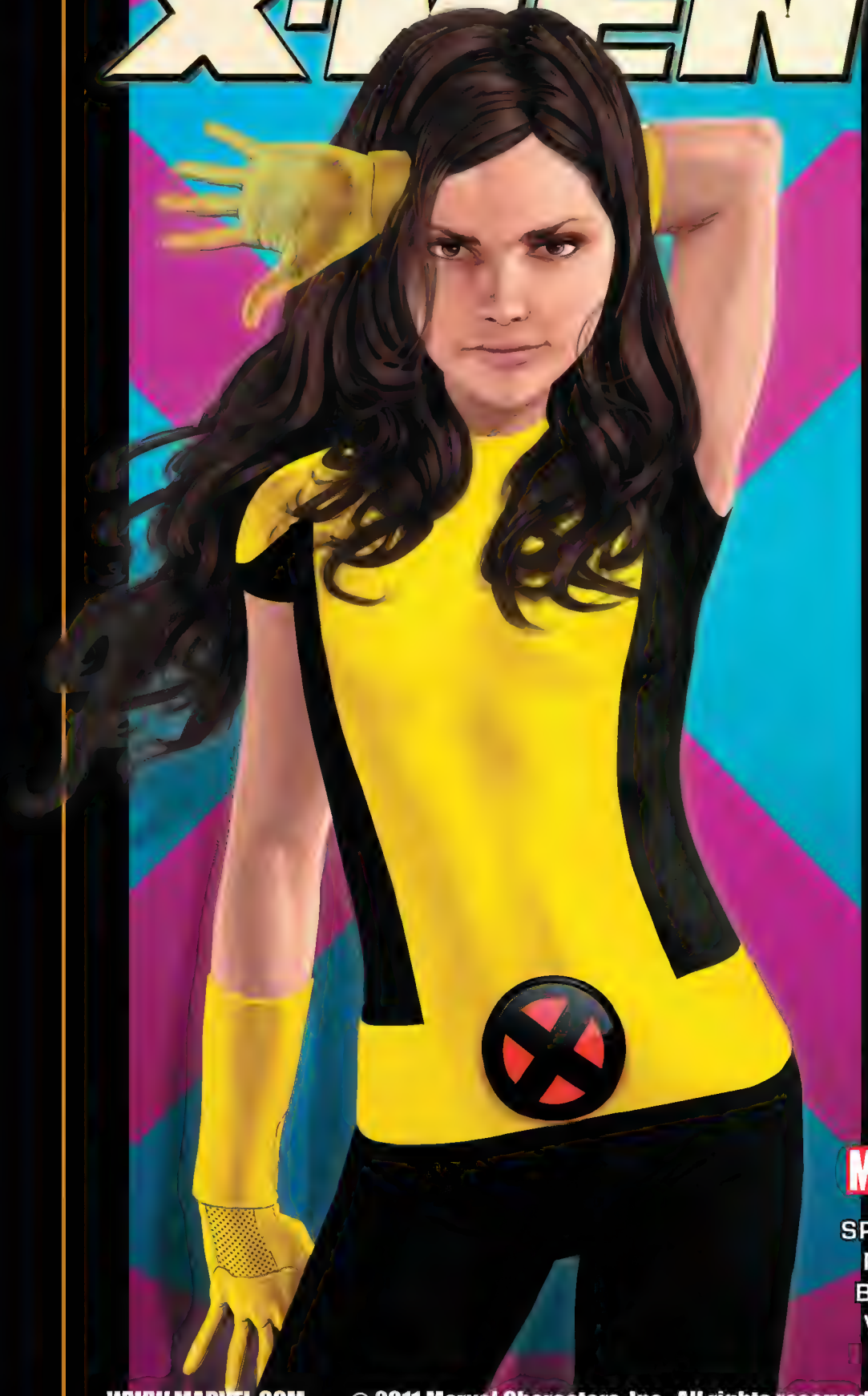
X-MEN®

ISSUE 06



MARVEL

SPENCER
MEDINA
BARBERI
VLASCO
LOKUS

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THREE WEEKS AGO.

Don't be afraid, Rogue.
Your prayers have been heard.

"--The world's not going to end just yet."
NOW. TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK CITY.
No--no... he's dead. You killed him!
Don't worry too much about him, you're next.
You weren't supposed to do this, Kitty.
Me? I'm not the one who betrayed us--
I didn't betray anyone! I just needed to get him to touch me--I needed to take his powers, so he couldn't...
Couldn't what?
What?
Phase.

PANE
RENEGADE
Oh. Right.

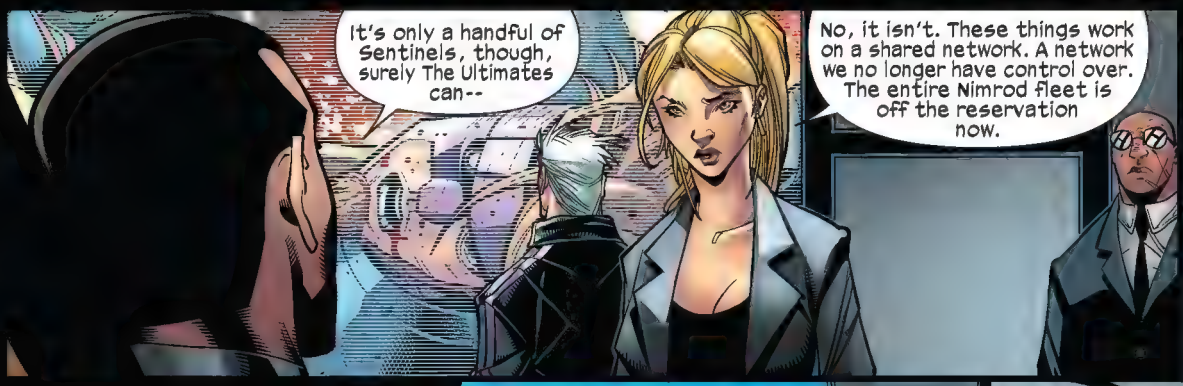
THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM. WASHINGTON, D.C.
I don't understand this, Val.
What's hard to understand, Mr. President? Stryker is a mutant. He can talk to technology, tell it what to do.
But how was he healing mutants like that?

What do you think the X-gene is? It's a machine. Microscopic and bio-engineered, sure--but it's still tech. He's obviously been telling it to self-destruct. Or at least play dead.
And we didn't know anything about this?

"It was buried in his medical records. When his father--not a big fan of mutants, as you no doubt recall--found out, he had Junior placed on experimental drugs, to keep his abilities dormant.
"The kid stays on the pills throughout his life, I guess eventually convinced he did in fact have some kind of condition.
"But years later, after Magneto's attack kills his wife and kids, we can now safely assume he goes off his meds--"

Leading to just the sort of destructive behavior that makes him such a hit with the news cycle right now.
And our Nimrods?

Well, as best as we can tell, Stryker--who just bit it thanks to some mutant girl who decides to *hit back*--with his dying breath, has taken over the Nimrods you sent to dispatch him.
Presumably just after you uploaded all this "*Cerebra*" data to them.


It's only a handful of Sentinels, though, surely The Ultimates can--
No, it isn't. These things work on a shared network. A network we no longer have control over. The entire Nimrod fleet is off the reservation now.

My God... What have we done?
You just gave a terrorist-controlled army of killer Sentinels the coordinates for every mutant in the United States of America.

What do we--what do we do now, then?
We watch while thousands of innocent mutants die tonight, then we start working on resignation letter drafts.
No--no. We can stop this. Pietro, what do you recommend we--

Pietro?

Kitty-- Rogue, she--
Did that thing I always told you she would do. Yeah.
No, I-- unff--didn't. I had a plan, until you--
HIS WILL BE DONE.
HIS WILL BE DONE.
Well, I dunno what you did, but I know it sure made them a hell of a lot meaner!

How did you know, anyway?
Jason--He remembered you from back where Stryker had all the kids locked up.
I didn't think anyone saw me.
Yeah, well--
I was trying to get him to trust me!
He would've been the *first*.
Um, guys--sorry to break up the fight here, but--
We need to run.
Yeah, well, running would be a lot easier if there weren't so many of--
Stop scattering like that, find cover! You're drawing their fire!
She was the only one who ever paid attention in Logan's classes.
We need more cover...

Okay, everyone grab onto me. They can't kill what they can't touch--
Pile in! Anyone who can't take their blast, get a hand on me!
Get in closer! We can still fit more--
Come on!

You okay, Kitty?
Y-yeah, just--lot to carry...
Can't do this for long--
Please...
They're leaving!

They're giving up. Why are they giving up?
Guess they can tell when they're gonna lose.
No, Jimmy--
--They just have a lot of other targets out there.
Great, well, now that all hellfire stopped raining down on us, anybody got any ideas--
--As to what we do now?

20 MINUTES LATER. THE MORLOCK TUNNELS.
I knew this would happen.
Well, I'm just gonna go on record as saying we don't have enough bathrooms for this.
And that dude is laying on my bed. Again.
They're not gonna be here long.
Neither are we.
You--!

You should probably start explaining why you're still here, Rogue--
I already told you, I had a plan! Everything I did, I was trying to take Stryker out. I needed to get Stryker's powers to do it. Then you came in and made a damn mess out of it--
You're lying. I knew we shouldn't trust you--

Who do we believe here? Rogue did hit me back at Times Square.
We get beat up by girls a lot more often than I'd like.
Yeah, but Kitty hit me before we even left.

And why couldn't you have just told us what you were trying to do?
Because he told me not to. I'm sorry. Believe me, Kitty, I wanted to--
He. You mean God.
Yeah.

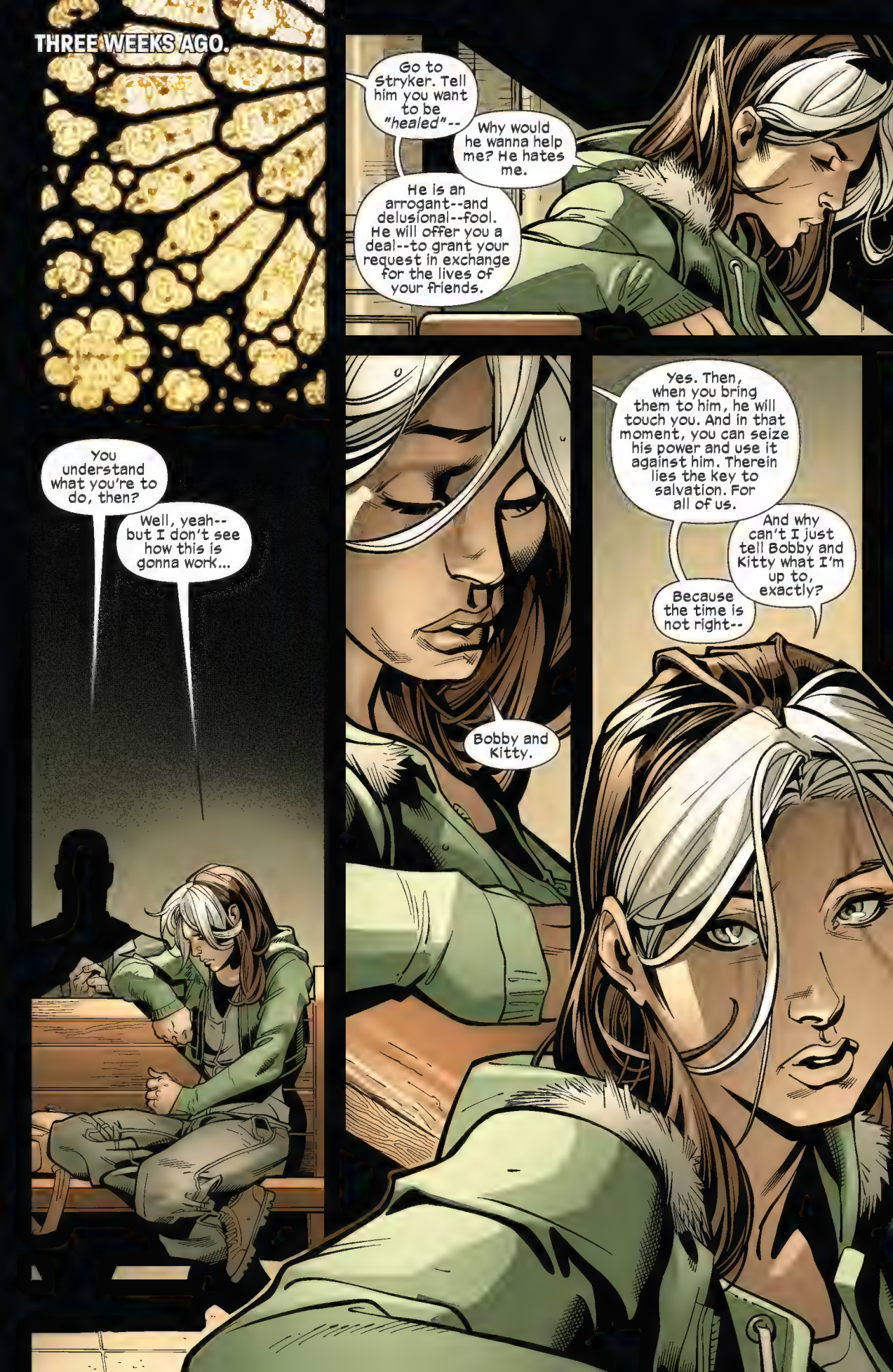
Fantastic. Any other instructions from a higher power I should know about before you get us all killed?
Yes, actually. He told me once this is over we need to go to the SEAR.
The SEAR?

Yeah.
The Southeast Asian Republic, SEAR?
Yeah.

Why the ¢#! would we go to the SEAR?
This is the voice of the revolution--

I am the Oracle of Change.
WHOA!!!
The establishment of Tian is complete. Heaven now exists on Earth.
Now there is a nation where you can become something more than what you are. For all who seek it, the Source will transform the flawed into the perfect.
It will transform the old into the new. The human into Celestial. The Deviant into the Eternal.
We will accept anyone who chooses to come to our shores with a desire to change in their hearts. We make no restrictions.
If you are persecuted, come to Tian. If you are hopeless, here is your new home. We are waiting for you...
I am the Oracle of Change. And this is a new day.

Persecuted?
Check.
Hopeless?
Check.
I think they meant us.
What was that?
Dunno...news is already saying everyone got it. Everyone everywhere.
And Tian... where the hell is Tian?
Like you even need to ask.
Okay, that's it--where are you getting this from? Who told you to come here? Who told you to do all this?
I...
And if you say God one more time, so help me--


THREE WEEKS AGO.
Go to Stryker. Tell him you want to be "healed"--
Why would he wanna help me? He hates me.
He is an arrogant--and delusional--fool. He will offer you a deal--to grant your request in exchange for the lives of your friends.
You understand what you're to do, then?
Well, yeah--but I don't see how this is gonna work...
Bobby and Kitty.
Yes. Then, when you bring them to him, he will touch you. And in that moment, you can seize his power and use it against him. Therein lies the key to salvation. For all of us.
And why can't I just tell Bobby and Kitty what I'm up to, exactly?
Because the time is not right--

TO BE CONTINUED...

ULTIMATE COMICS™

THE ULTIMATES®

HICKMAN PETERSON RIBIC WHITE

ISSUE 05

MARVEL

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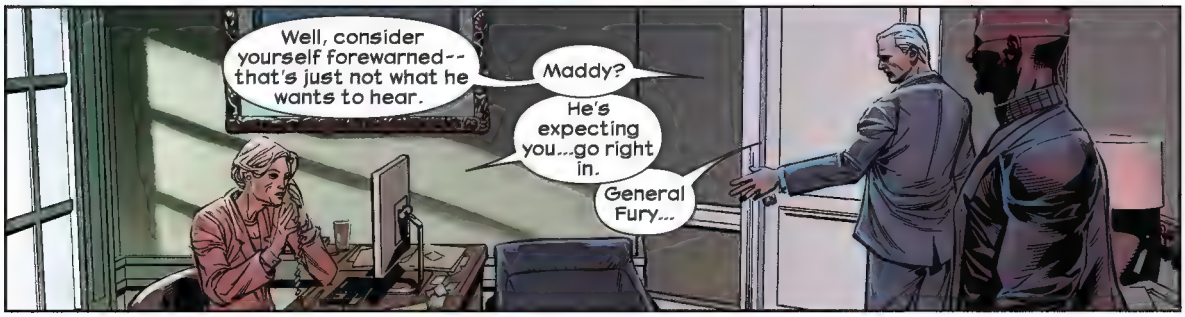
ONE WEEK LATER.
NICK FURY.
THE WHITE HOUSE.
Nicholas Fury. Chief of Staff Morgan is expecting me.
Sign here and I'll call down that...
Nick!
I've got him, Wayne. Thanks.
You're five minutes late.
I had to handle an NSA brief that landed on my desk before getting on my chopper.
I'm here now.
Fair enough.
The Joint Chiefs will be meeting in an hour, but the President wanted some time before the two of you joined them.
We're swimming a bit out of our depth here.
The appropriate term is drowning, Thomas.
Just how bad are things on the civilian side?

Well, the economy was already a wreck before all this. We'd suspended trading for the past week, but the markets had to reopen... so we're doing that this morning.
It's going to be ugly--probably bloody...but I'm taking some comfort in the fact that it could've been much worse.
Go on.
If this would have happened in China or in the Midwest, in a few months the world would be hopelessly broke or starving.
Hell, China seems remarkably stable considering the collapse of the SEAR--
I don't see it staying that way.
No one does, but at least it's holding for now. I suppose if we're desperately looking for a silver lining, Detroit looks poised for a serious comeback.
How so?
The Children swallowed the entirety of Deutschland...
Our German friends are now out of the car business.
...What's he looking for, Thomas?
You have to understand. Yes, this is a military issue, but with the blind media speculation, and the sheer immensity of the events of the past few weeks, the public psyche is beyond fragile.
For at least the past fifty years, we've arguably been the dominant power on this planet--last week, we woke up and we're, *at best*, third. *We need to do something.*
The President is looking for a response, Nick.
You know...
My daddy was big on sendin' messages.

The man had some kind of temper--he was prone to action.
Now, to be clear, my father was a serious customer--he could back it up...but I remember, he always jumped in without looking.
It was the end of him, that uncontrolled need to act.

I don't think that's what we're talking about here.
Really? Because we just got our asses kicked in a way they haven't been kicked before, and I have no idea how to deal with this...
No one does.

Nick, I understand that, but--
No, Thomas, you don't.
As bad as it tastes, they've gifted us a moment to catch our breath. I have things in play...we need to use this time wisely.
Just doing something to do something... ain't the way to go.


Well, consider yourself forewarned--that's just not what he wants to hear.
Maddy?
He's expecting you...go right in.
General Fury...

The President will see you now.

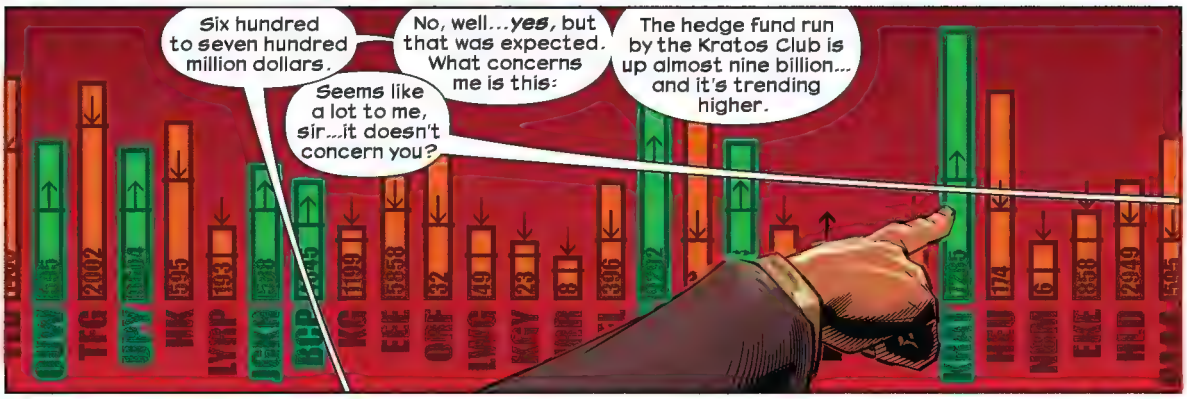
TONY STARK,
TRANSATLANTIC.

Pilot says we should be on the ground in Paris in seventy minutes, Mr. Stark.
And you wanted me to tell you when the markets opened in New York.
Ah!
Well, then...

Let the bloodletting begin.
BE-DOOP

Hmmm.
Bad?
Oh, absolutely.

You don't seem that concerned, sir.
That's because, while it's true that the stock market is an unpredictable organism, like any other living thing, it also has parameters of predictable behavior.
And since we have decades of close research regarding said behavior, we can comfortably extrapolate out a range of what our losses will be today based on the market's opening in five minutes.
So how much?


Six hundred to seven hundred million dollars.
No, well...yes, but that was expected. What concerns me is this:
The hedge fund run by the Kratos Club is up almost nine billion... and it's trending higher.
Seems like a lot to me, sir...it doesn't concern you?

But that's you--you're in the club. Stark Industries may have lost millions, but overall you made billions.
You always win don't you, Mr. Stark?
Win?
I suppose if you define that as the Club I'm a member of using a nuclear device--made by my company--to short-sell the global markets.
But me personally?

They killed hundreds of thousands of people for damned money... killed them with something I built.
Jarvis, a win is when we get to France I beat some of these people to death.

SPIDER-WOMAN.
THE TRISKELION.
BE-DOOP

SNIFF
MIL
TOP SECRET
NSA Clearing Station Seven
New York City: Traffic Cameras
[Routine recognition search for the dates 11/11 - 12/11]
Caught my eye.
-Fury
Oh... absolutely not.

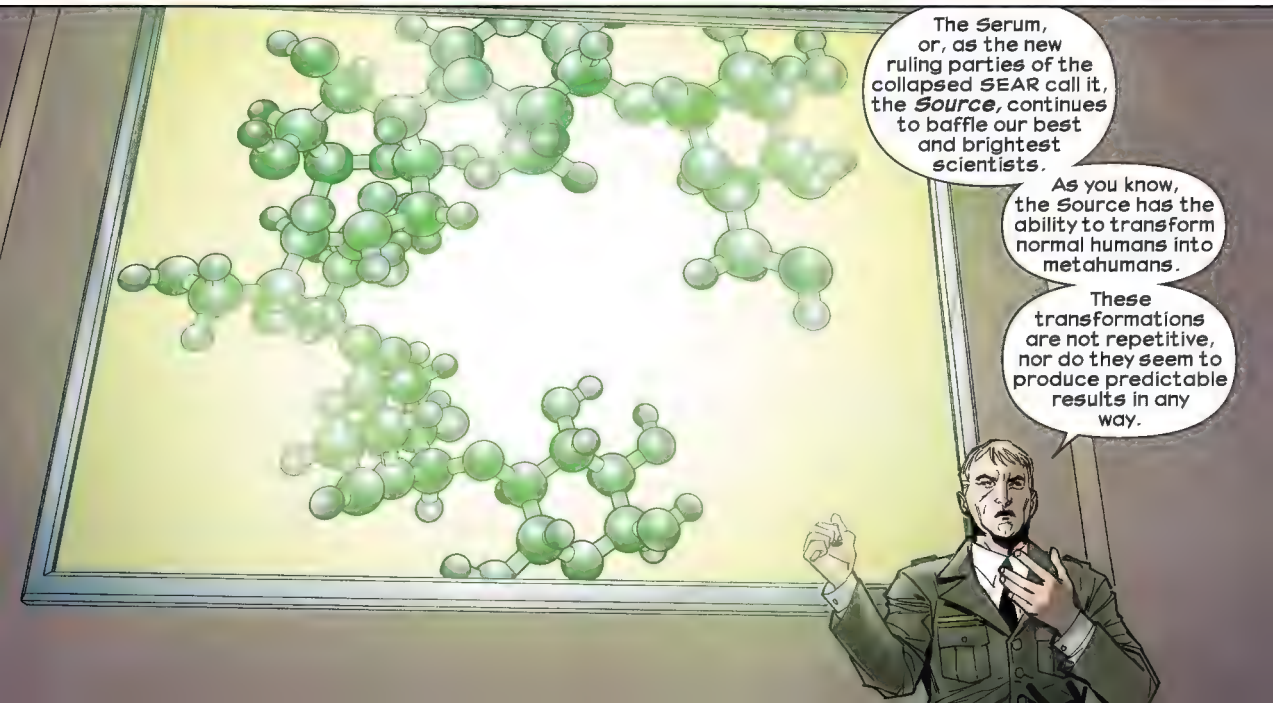
HAWKEYE.
THE PENTAGON.
Everyone here?
Director of the FBI stepped out for a phone call, Barton.
He can catch up. Let's go.
My guys are passing out briefing documents for your edification, and it looks like I'm going to have around twenty minutes for you...the floor is yours.
Let it fly.

There's nothing in here about Europe.
It's all related to the collapse of the Southeast Asian Republic.
What's the meaning of this?

We will not be discussing intelligence on the *City* today, nor will we be discussing it tomorrow.
We will not be doing this because there is *no* intelligence beyond the S.H.I.E.L.D. logs... which you already have.
Shouldn't we be tasking satellites? Maybe try to get some human assets in play?

You already know that conventional means won't work. We have other options in play.
Which are?
Above your pay grade, sir.

-sigh-
Have we made any progress in synthesizing the Serum?

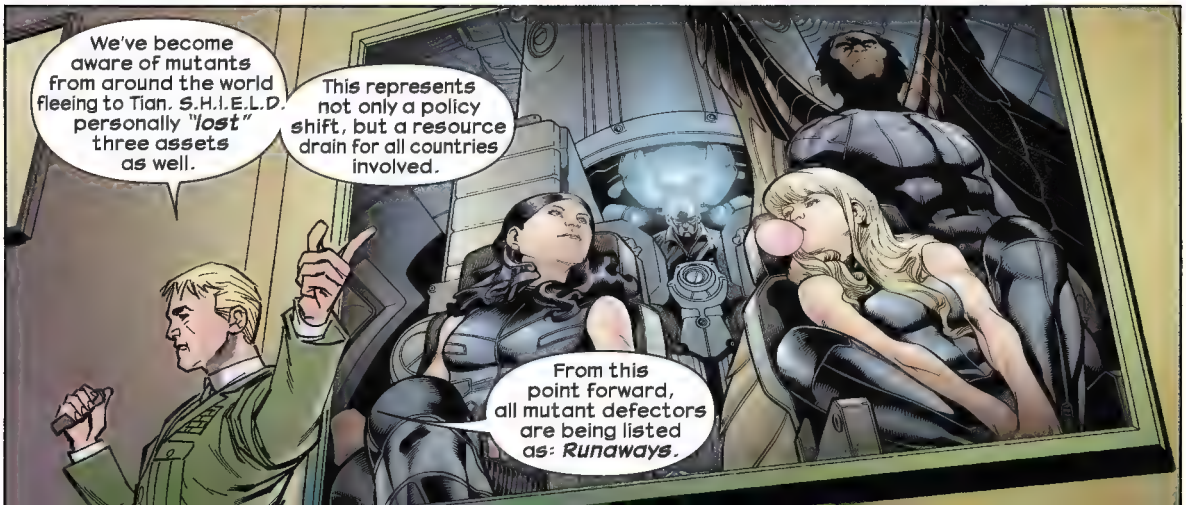

The Serum, or, as the new ruling parties of the collapsed SEAR call it, the *Source*, continues to baffle our best and brightest scientists.
As you know, the Source has the ability to transform normal humans into metahumans.
These transformations are not repetitive, nor do they seem to produce predictable results in any way.

And what do we know about the SEAR government?

While not formally recognized at this point and time, the new government is calling itself Tian.
Right now, there appears to be two factions that have aligned themselves behind one of two brothers.
The Eternals led by Kuan-Yin, and the Celestials led by Shen...
You've met them, yes?
I have. They were... *impressive.*

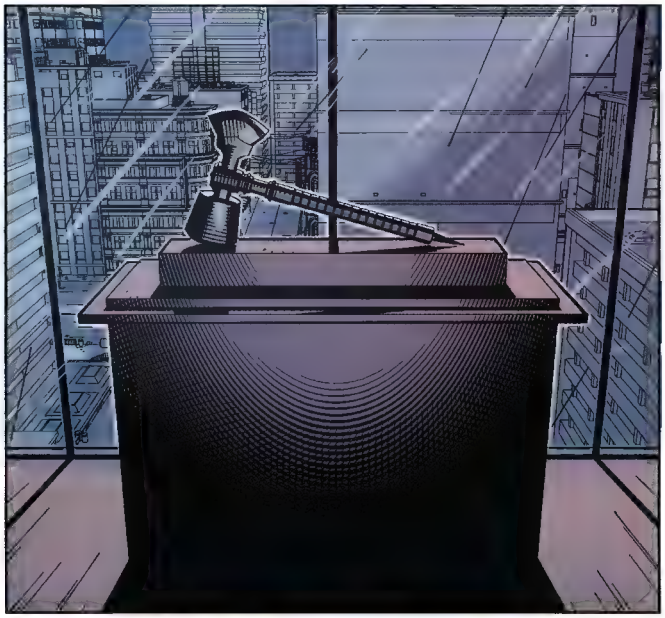
Talk about the numbers. How many metahumans do they have?

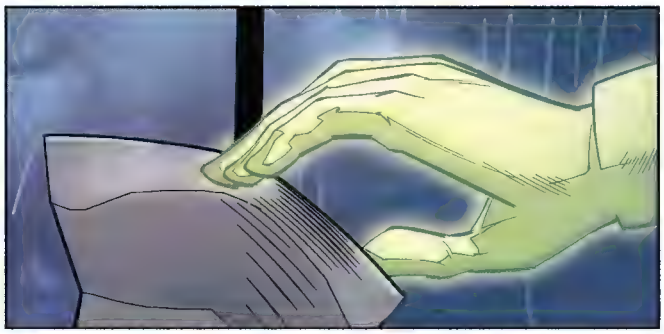
At first, the number was around one hundred thousand.
Since then, the still-human members of Tian have begun taking the *Source* and that number has doubled.
They're also gaining numbers from other places.

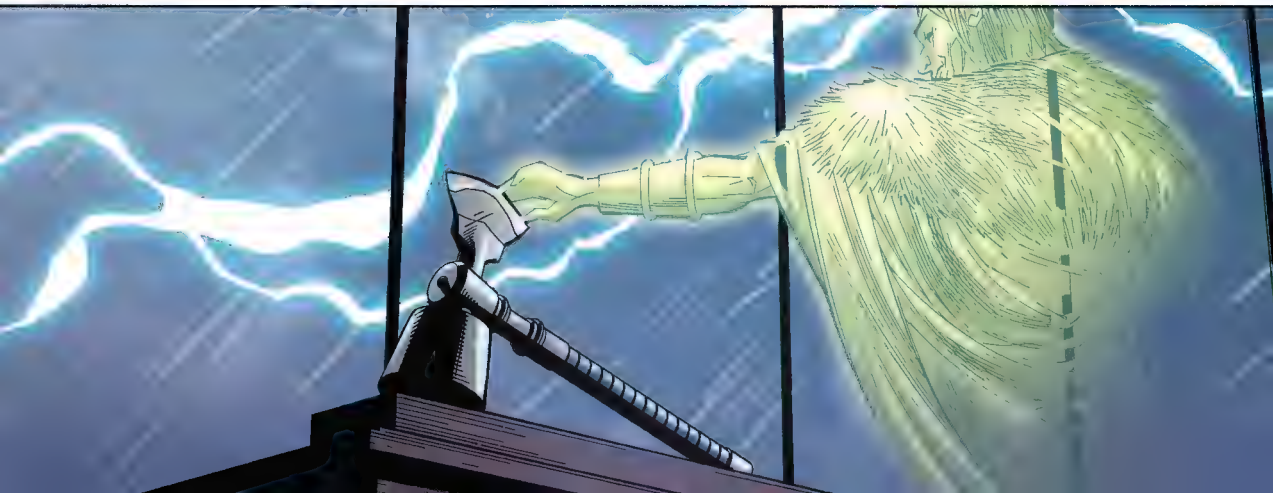

We've become aware of mutants from around the world fleeing to Tian. S.H.I.E.L.D. personally *"lost"* three assets as well.
This represents not only a policy shift, but a resource drain for all countries involved.
From this point forward, all mutant defectors are being listed as: *Runaways.*

THOR.
STARK TOWER.

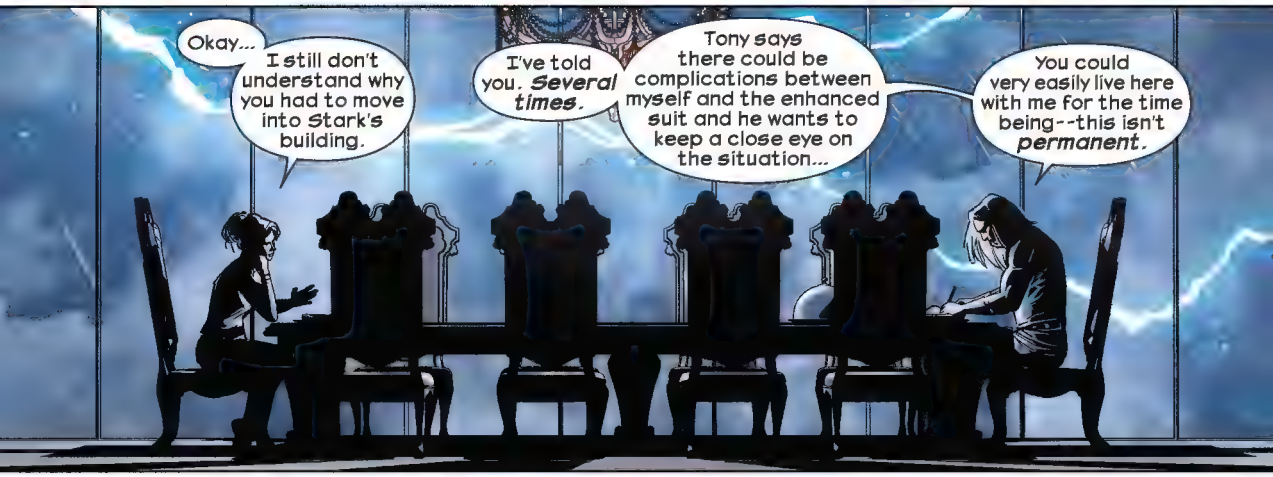
Is this you?



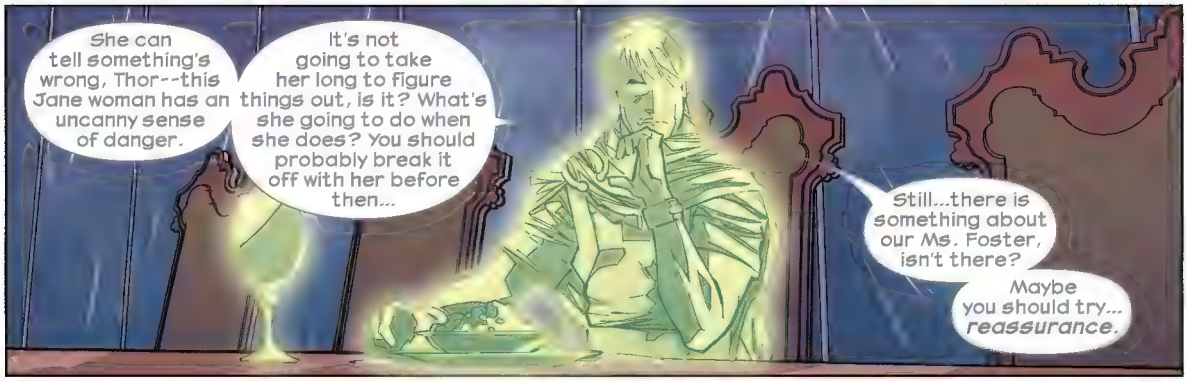


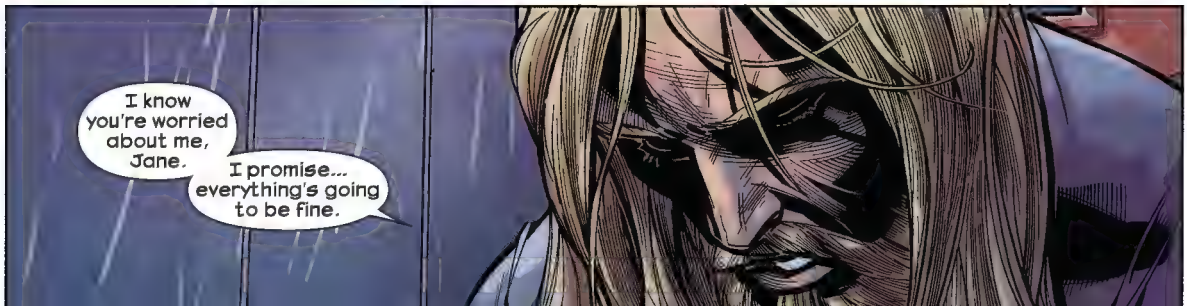


No, Jane.
It's just a storm.


Okay...
I still don't understand why you had to move into Stark's building.
I've told you. *Several times.*
Tony says there could be complications between myself and the enhanced suit and he wants to keep a close eye on the situation...
You could very easily live here with me for the time being--this isn't *permanent.*

...I think I'll stay in the apartment.


She can tell something's wrong, Thor--this Jane woman has an uncanny sense of danger.
It's not going to take her long to figure things out, is it? What's she going to do when she does? You should probably break it off with her before then...
Still...there is something about our Ms. Foster, isn't there?
Maybe you should try... *reassurance.*


I know you're worried about me, Jane.
I promise... everything's going to be fine.

More lies aren't going to help, Thor.
Surely not. Death hangs over this world, Odinson. There will be war--glorious war--but this is a realm of too few heroes and a legion of evil men.
You will be called on. You will answer. And like us, you will, most assuredly, die.
Best to leave the girl and get on with it, no?
Aye! Look at me, brother... give me your eyes, for I have grave news.

I have farted.

HAHAHAHAHA!

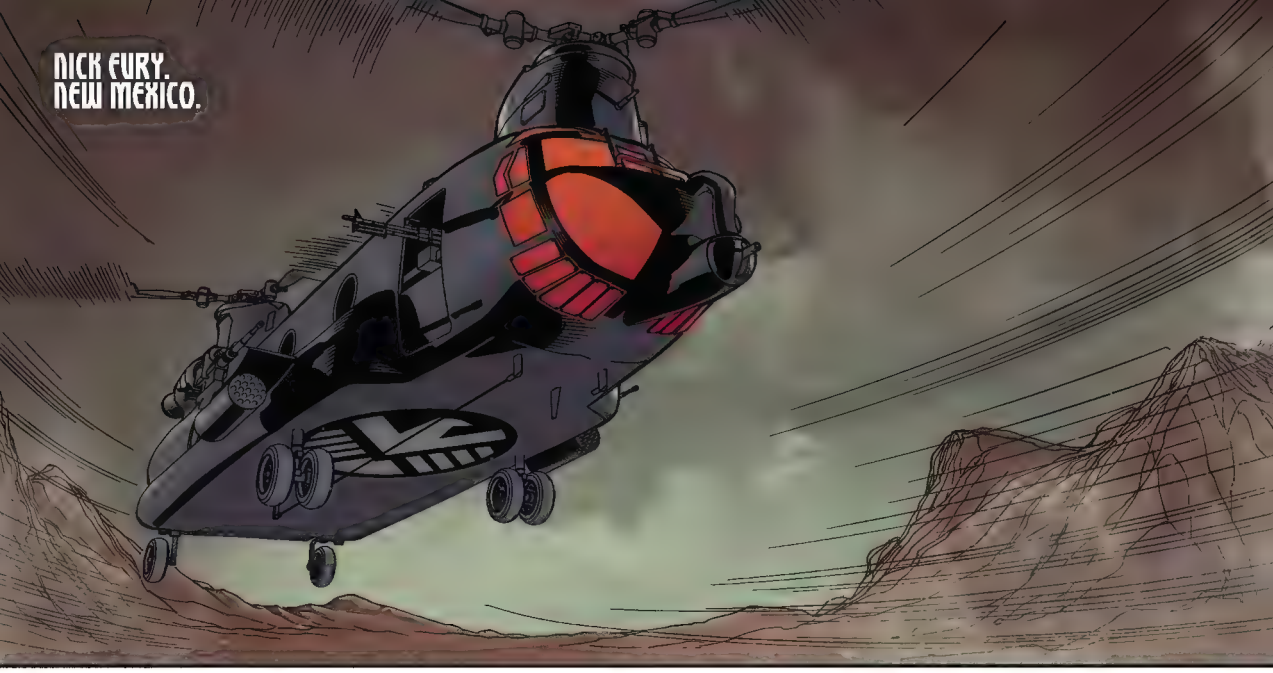
THE FALCON.
ORBITAL S.H.I.E.L.D.
WEAPONS PLATFORM.
K-6.
All clear, Mr. Wilson.
Ready when you are.
Drop the floor out.
"I hear you've been looking for me, Sam."

Yeah. I flew in two days ago and--
Yeah, sorry about that. We're locked down and edging towards oblivion...
There just ain't enough hours in the day, son.
No, no... I'm not complaining. The extra time helped me get my thoughts together.
"I've got something new, Nick--something I think can help."
I'm all ears.
Hmph... you're going to need more than that.
"So, this place--the City--is basically a closed system.
"The files your team made available to me confirmed my suspicion, but also that it was perfectly so.
"The City bleeds no waste. Not biological, not chemical... not even latent heat or excess energy. We learn nothing from the outside.
"So if we're going to figure these guys out... it's going to have to be from the inside."

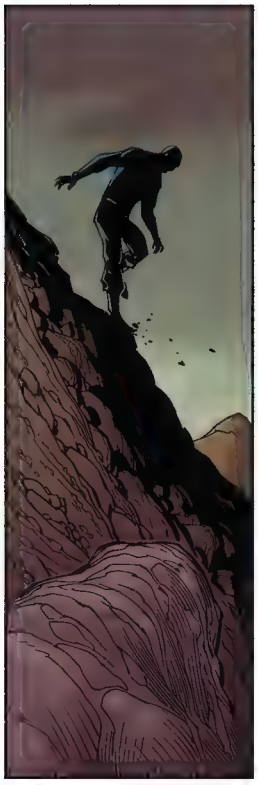
Watch this.
I don't know what I'm--
Give it a minute.
Wha--
How did...?
Frequency shift.
"Every strand of DNA contains spatial locator sequencing. Think of it as a home address--even as an anchor--for things that exist in the multiverse.
"I chemically rewrote the code to temporarily exist slightly out of phase.
"There's a problem with harmonics knocking things back into order, but that's fitting..."
I got the idea playing with an old radio.
Anyway, keep your mouth shut and there's your way in...

"All you need now is some idiot willing to do the recon."
BEEP

TAP TAP TAP
LOG: Sam Wilson.
ID: Falcon.
TIMESTAMP: 17:21 - Monday
Landing and insertion successful. Stealth tech appears sufficient. Proceeding deeper into the *City*.
Oh God, what the hell am I doing here?


NICK FURY.
NEW MEXICO.

Stay here.



So...what's for breakfast, soldier?
Well, for dinner I had rattlesnake. For breakfast, it looks like--
More rattlesnake.
Nice.
You know, someone should probably let you know that animal is on the endangered species list...

But then again, aren't we all?
It's good to see you, Nick. It really is...
But I'm not coming back.

America needs its symbol...

And I need my captain.

TO BE CONTINUED...

ULTIMATE COMICS™

THE ULTIMATES®

HICKMAN PETERSON RIBIC RAUCH DELGADO

ISSUE 06

MARVEL

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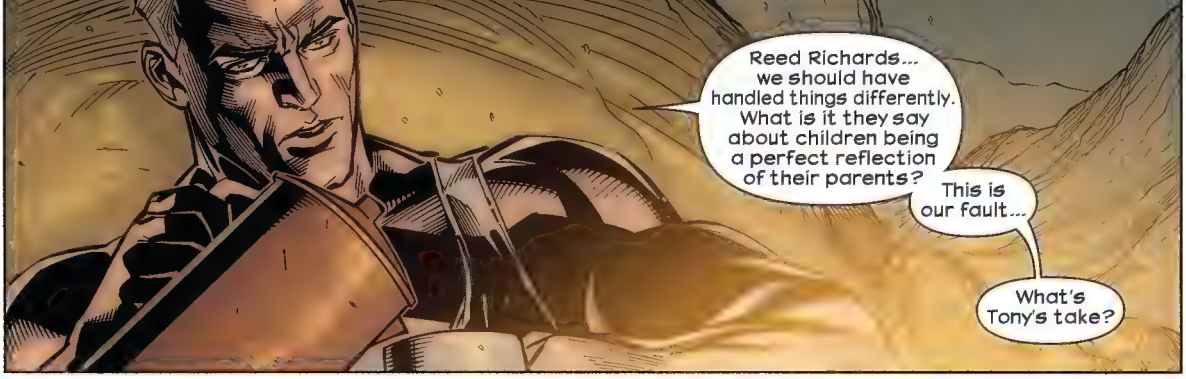
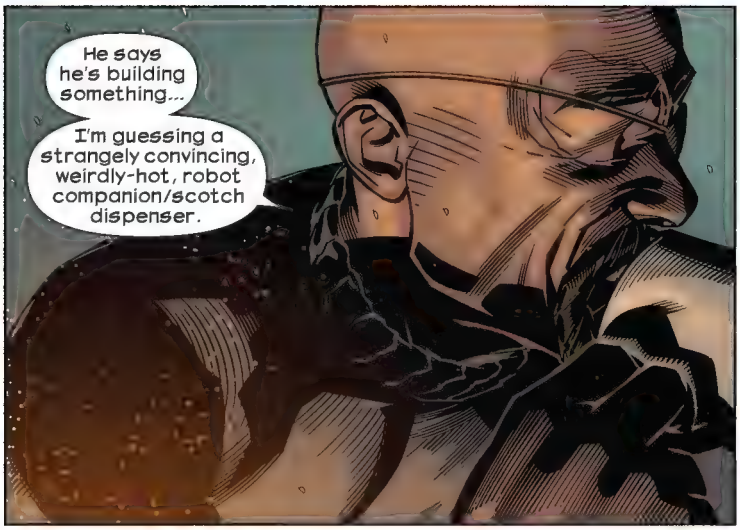
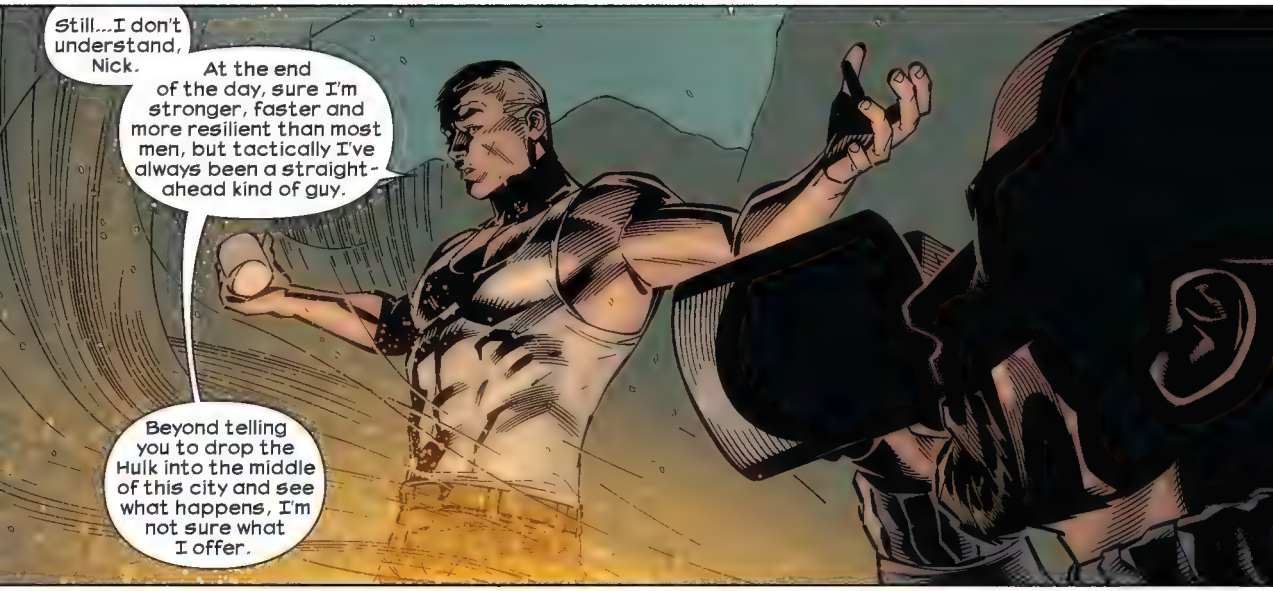
CAPTAIN AMERICA.
NEW MEXICO.
What if I say *please?*
Ask however you like, Nick... doesn't change the answer.
Coffee?
Sure.
I've seen what they're saying on the news...tell me what really happened.
Besides the revolution in Southeast Asia and the nuke in South America?
Our old friend Reed Richards created a Darwin bubble. He accelerated the evolution of generations of humans and brought a future city back to his past--to the here and now...
They destroyed Western Europe and we lost almost half of our fleet in an engagement with them.
It's as bad as it gets. We have...*no solutions.*


Reed Richards... we should have handled things differently. What is it they say about children being a perfect reflection of their parents?
This is our fault...
What's Tony's take?


He says he's building something...
I'm guessing a strangely convincing, weirdly-hot, robot companion/scotch dispenser.

You're probably right.


Still...I don't understand, Nick.
At the end of the day, sure I'm stronger, faster and more resilient than most men, but tactically I've always been a straight-ahead kind of guy.
Beyond telling you to drop the Hulk into the middle of this city and see what happens, I'm not sure what I offer.

Well, no lie, I do like the way that Hulk thing sounds...
But I don't actually need you to *do* anything-- I need what you represent.

What are--

Steve, the problem is the President.

We're facing enemies we can't defeat--it's just not going to happen...

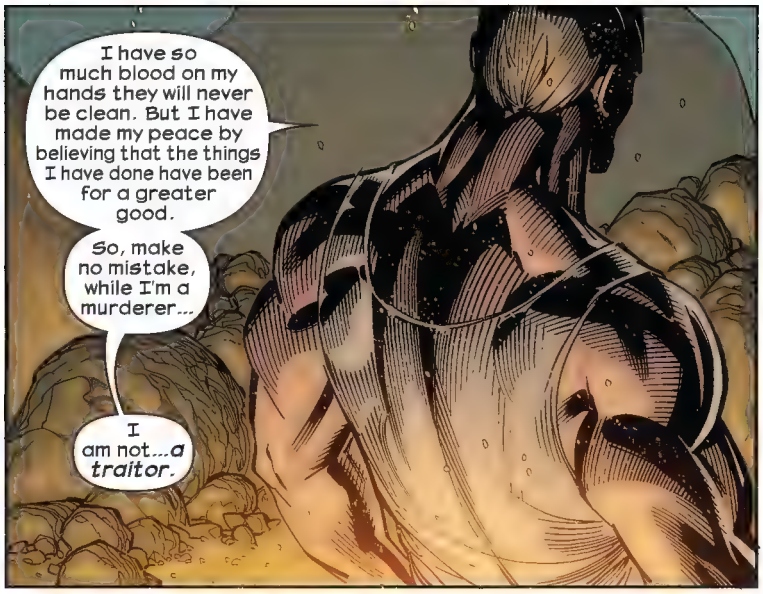
But the President's *demanding action* and a lot of good people are going to die because of it.

If you were to publicly come out against--

Stop talking.

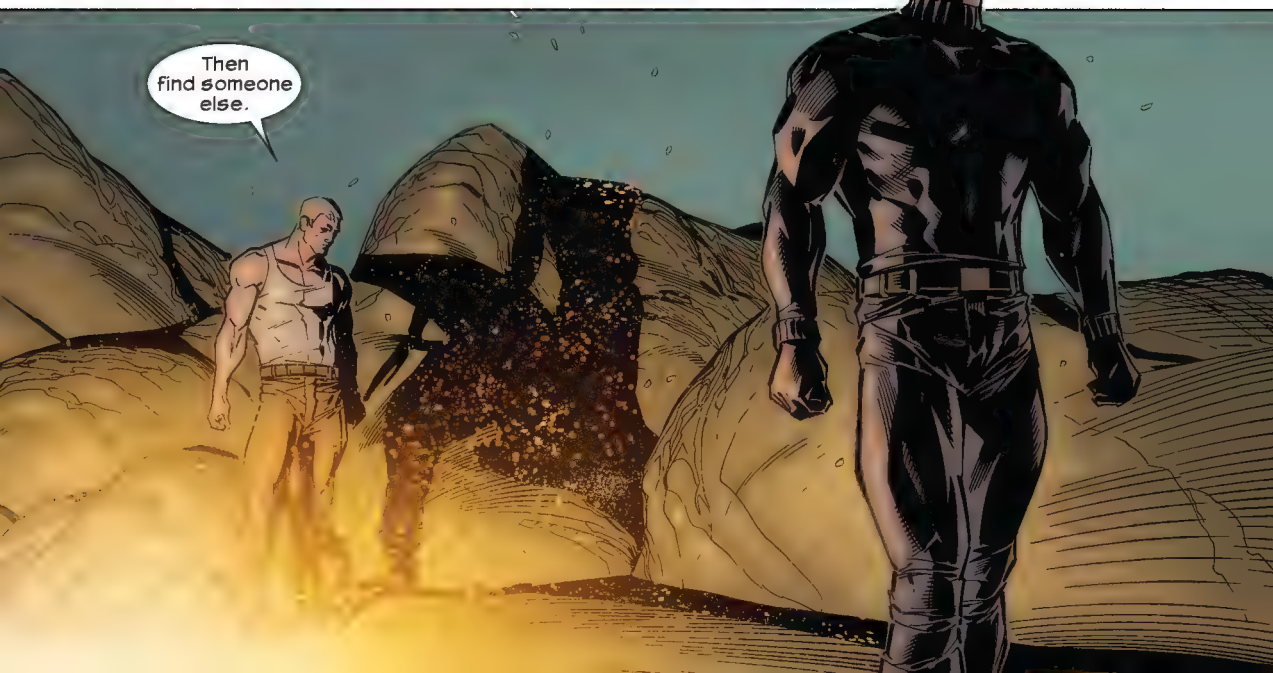
You should leave, Nick.

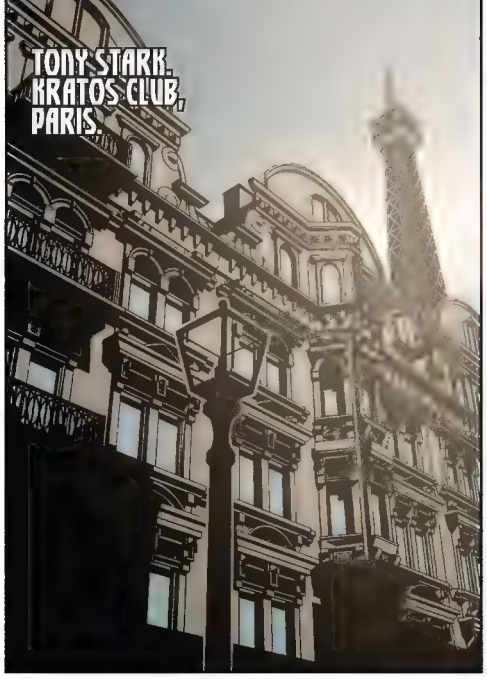
Something has to be done.


I have so much blood on my hands they will never be clean. But I have made my peace by believing that the things I have done have been for a greater good.
So, make no mistake, while I'm a murderer...
I am not...*a traitor.*

Steve... if we don't do this, then--
Find another way.

And if there isn't one?


Then find someone else.



You tried to kill me-- I came here to return the favor.

Is that why you brought the vandal?

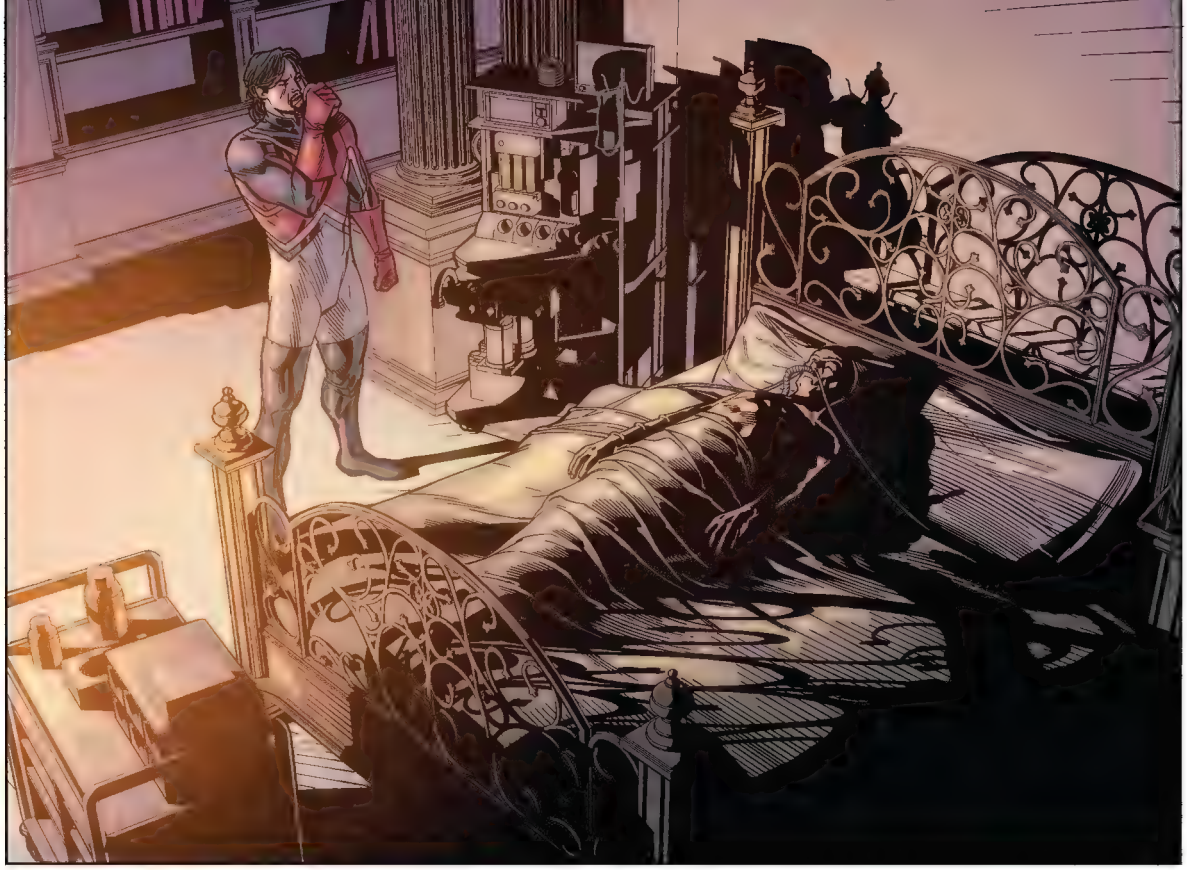
So?
No one tried to kill you, Anthony. You weren't supposed to be there...
And what's your larger problem here--the method or the act?
...
Over one hundred thousand innocents were *killed*.
And your people just killed roughly twenty-seven million.
Surely you must have a more concise point to make.
Excuse me?
Don't get angry, Tony...it's my fault he knows. I popped open the N.S.A.-encrypted, Pentagon-held S.H.I.E.L.D. database...
People are going to go nuts when they find out everything in Europe was caused by one of your super hero friends.
And it was always *the plan* to cause a global market crash.
You're the one who didn't want to know how.
Wanting deniability already made you look feeble, Anthony...
Keep it up and I'm going to think your super-power is actually impuissance.
...
I can't believe this.
Of course you can...
It's exactly what we intended.
Now would you like to know how well our plan worked?

We always projected a significant increase in our holdings, enough for us to really get aggressive with the global changes we wanted to undertake.

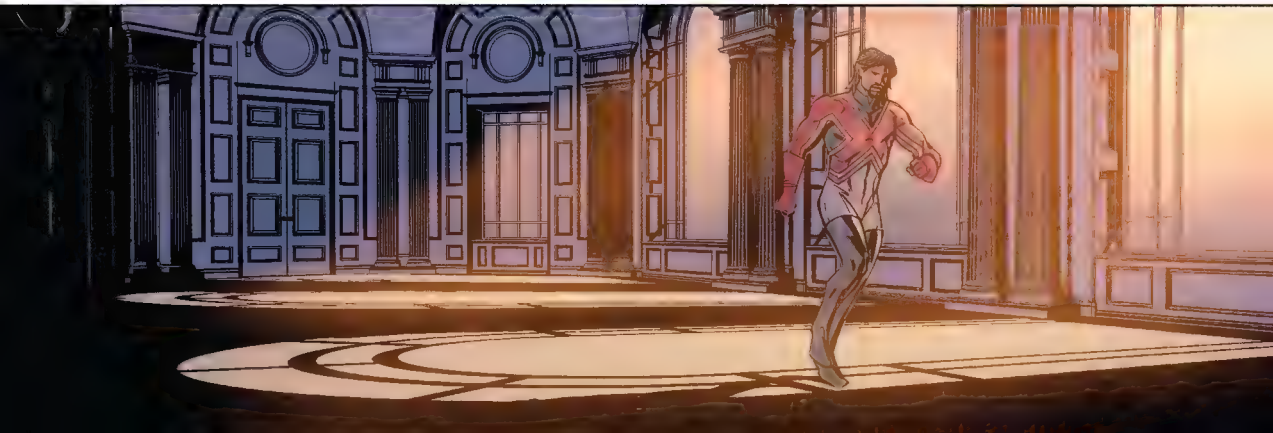
But the cascading nature of the manufactured Uruguay event along with the fall of Northern Europe and the uprising in the Southeast Asian Republic has resulted in a massive underestimation of our final yield.

Before all this, our group held roughly one-point-seven percent of all global assets.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN.
BRADDOCK MANOR.
It should be raining.
Not to match a mood, mind you. Or any other melancholiac reason...
But because it would be fitting.
Do you remember? It was absolutely pouring the day our bastard father completed his prototype of these suits.
That we could use them to fly away was simply...justice.
A toast to you, *brother*... with father's very best scotch.



Get better soon, Brian.
When you are, we'll defile the sky together.



I hope you said goodbye, Jamie.

You can't run from the inevitable, son. Brian isn't going to be with us much longer.
Don't let denial rob you of a final farewell.
Tell him goodbye.

If he dies, the first thing I do will be sending you to join him.
You did this.

There was no way to know the first versions of the suit would cause...
You did this.
Yes! I did this!
I did it for a reason. Look around!
I did it for need.

You %@&#$ bastard. He was my brother.
He was more than that.
He was the very best we had...and now all the world is left with is you.

THE FALCON.
THE CITY.
TIMESTAMP: 22:51 - Tuesday
Peripheral recon completed. As reported by Thor, much of *the City* remains empty. However, this would appear to be a temporary condition.
I've counted 7 (seven) birthing areas alone on the north side of the Central hub.
Now I enter the *Dome*.

Maker. I am detecting micro-decibel exhalations. Isolating contaminant.
You were correct to implement new security protocols.
£@#%£!!
Of course I was. In the last one thousand years, when have I not been?
Now please release him, City.
Sam Wilson.
I saw you falling from space... if I wanted you dead, you would most certainly be that.
It's been quite some time... let me have a look at you.

How could you have seen me?
I dropped in from low orbit.
Since we lowered the walls for the City to begin its expansion, I have been monitoring our external environment.
Computer networks, general communication--including the shadowy, more secure, variety--and, of course, any objects circling the sky above us.
I like to keep a close eye on any possible irritants.
See, what you have to understand is while the Children watch over the City...
I watch the World.
My god... that really is you, isn't it?
How are you alive, Reed?
Oh, longevity is a side effect of my enhanced abilities. I've lacked an entropy-based, naturally decaying biology since my transformation...
Only through great violence has my death been a possibility.
No...my cross over the past millennium has been evolution.
I have had to go to long, painful lengths to expand my intellect so that I could stay ahead of my perfect children.
Imagine the smartest neanderthal to ever live being faced with the simplest of modern men...
What good would he be?
Which brings us to your problem, Sam.

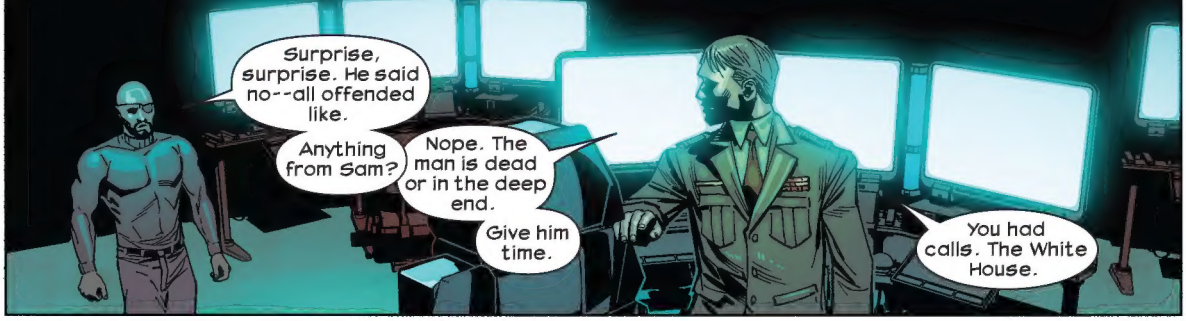
Is this the part where you remind me what a monster you've become?
You sound like them, Sam. Don't do that.
Fury, Thor, Captain America--the heroes that once tried to kill me--all they understand is the fist.
You're a scientist first--you should understand what you're going to be looking at.
What's that mean?
I'm going to give you--only you--free rein of the City. Come and go as you like.
Observe. Report... discover.
Why would you do that?
Because I want you to fully understand what it really is when you explain the City to them.
I want you to speak slowly so they can understand the truth you find here.
That this is the future...

And that humanity--as it is in the here and now--cannot catch up.
And you're just so damn sure that's the conclusion I'll reach?
This road only leads to one destination, my friend.
It's going to be important for world leaders to stand up and guide their people in the coming days.
It's going to take a paradigm shift in thinking--the creation of a communal coping mechanism.
How else will mankind find the grace to manage its own extinction spiral?

THE ULTIMATES.
THE TRISKELION.

BE-DOOP
Authorization granted.

What's the big board say, Clint?
All quiet and locked down, sir...the boys and girls are tucked in tight.
Did you give the man back his shield?

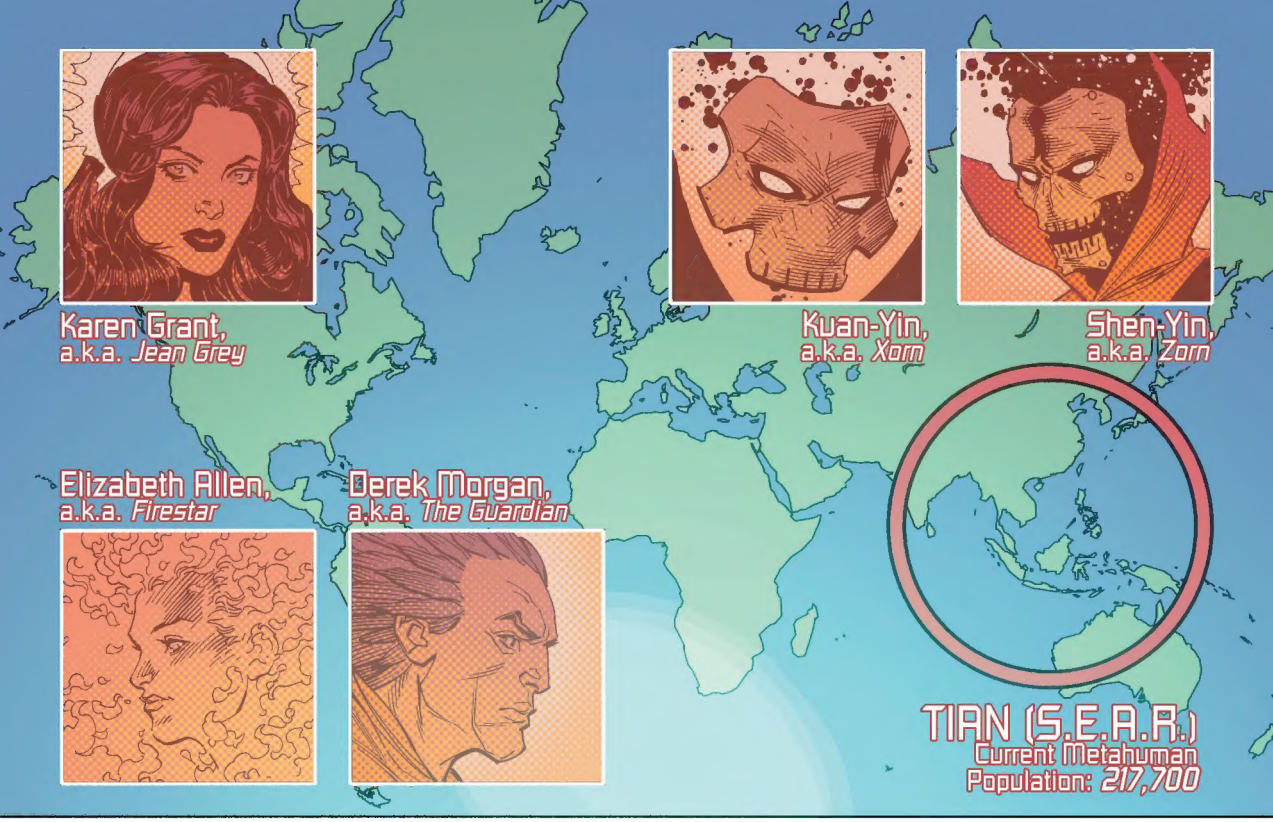

Surprise, surprise. He said no--all offended like.
Anything from Sam?
Nope. The man is dead or in the deep end.
Give him time.
You had calls. The White House.

He's going to get us all killed.
Okay... I assume you've been running global and domestic simulations...give me the broad view.
All right. You know in chess, where you don't have any moves left and you find yourself in a condition called checkmate...
Yeah?
Well, we're past that and to the point where you kick the board off the table.

We cannot win and we have no moves.
And if I told you to change the game... rewrite the rules?

It changes things...

Then we have options.
CLICK


Karen Grant,
a.k.a. Jean Grey
Kuan-Yin,
a.k.a. Xorn
Shen-Yin,
a.k.a. Zorn
Elizabeth Allen,
a.k.a. Firestar
Derek Morgan,
a.k.a. The Guardian
TIAN (S.E.A.R.)
Current Metahuman
Population: 217,700

Okay...
I'm sure you've game-planned it, so assemble a team--very quietly.
Op window?
Starting now and ending before we have to kick the board off the table.

I'm going to get a few hours sleep.
You know where to find me if you need anything.
On it, sir.

BLACK WIDOW.

Whhaaaaaa!

Whhaaaaa!

Whaaaa!
It's okay...

Shhh.
It's okay, mommy's got you.

I know. It's scary at night.
You wake up and everyone you love is gone...I get it: this is a scary, scary place...
It's the world we have.
But you don't need to worry, baby--not one bit. Because mommy is always going to be here.
No bad dreams, no bad guys, no anyone is ever going to keep me away.
And I know that there are bad people out there...I do...
But if someone was to try--to ever try to take you away--or even try to hurt you...
We'd stop them. Yes, we would...
And you wouldn't have to worry about them ever again.
Because mommy and daddy would shoot them in the face with an Uzi.
Sweet dreams.
TO BE CONTINUED...